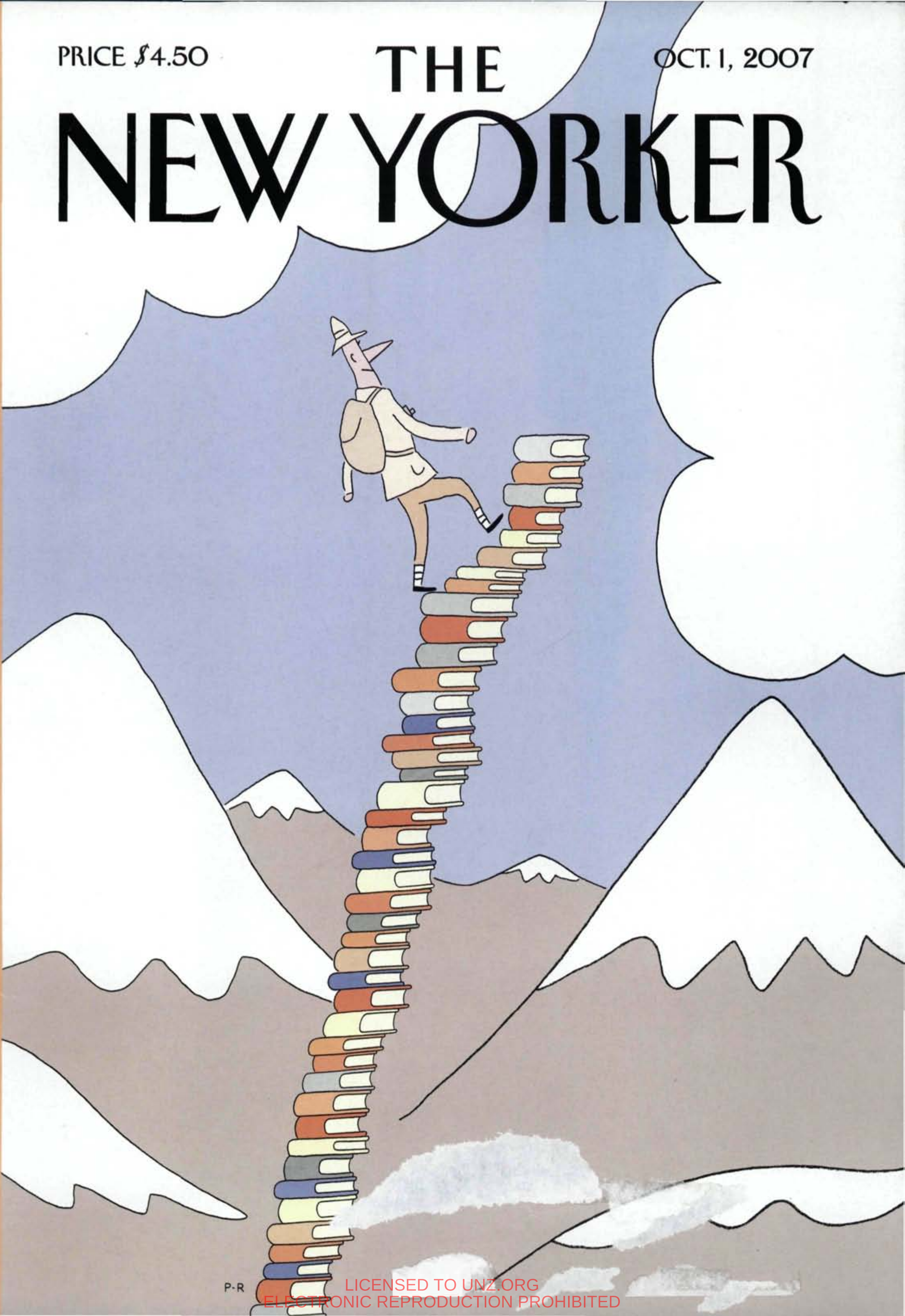
PRICE $4.50

THE NEW YORKER

OCT. 1, 2007



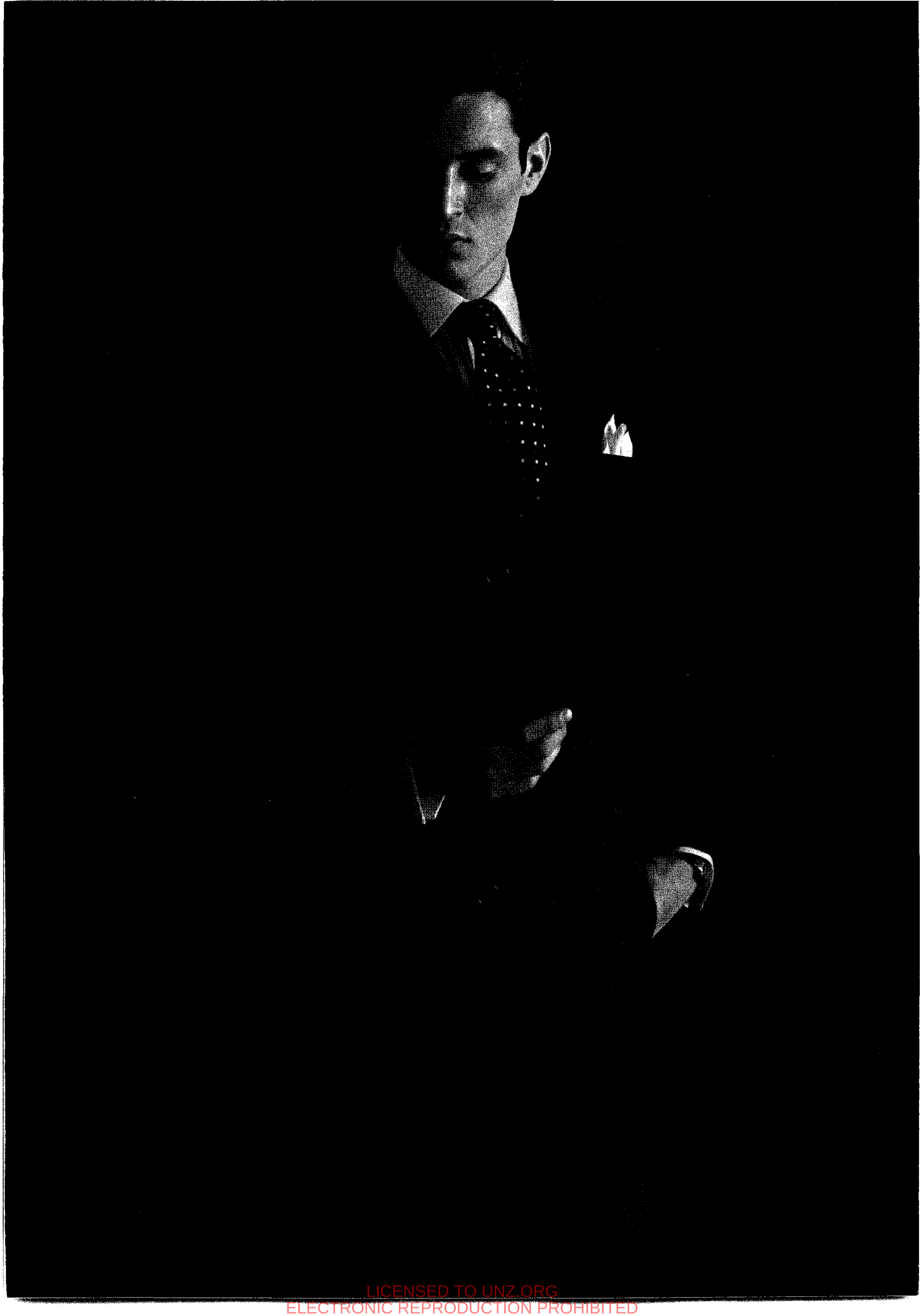
Ralph Lauren

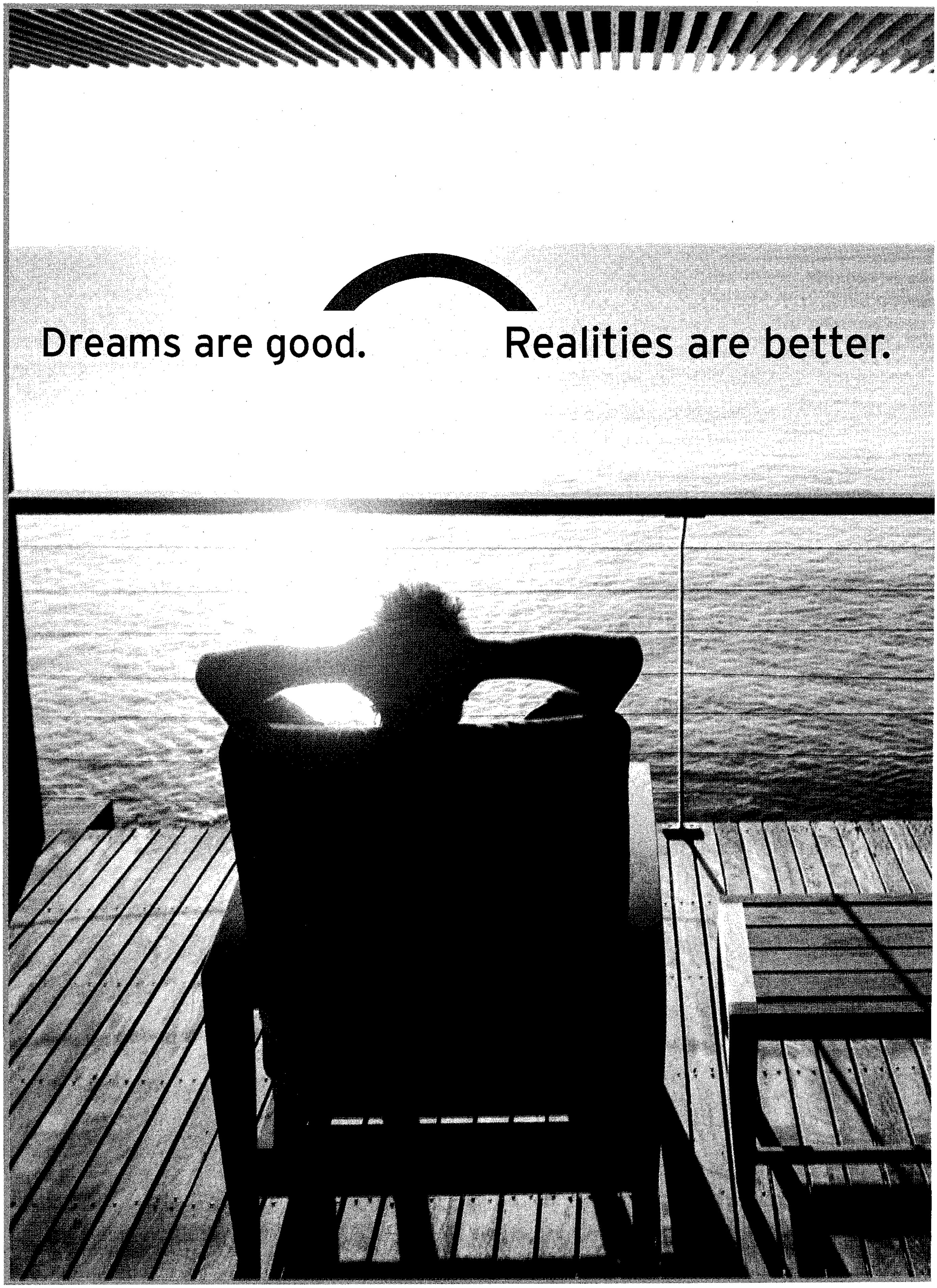
In the fine tradition of bespoke tailoring
Ralph Lauren presents Purple Label for Fall 2007.
Experience Made to Measure suits, hand-tailored
to exacting standards from exclusive fabrics,
Made to Order accessories and personalised services
of the highest quality.

Please call or visit a Ralph Lauren store
to arrange a private appointment.

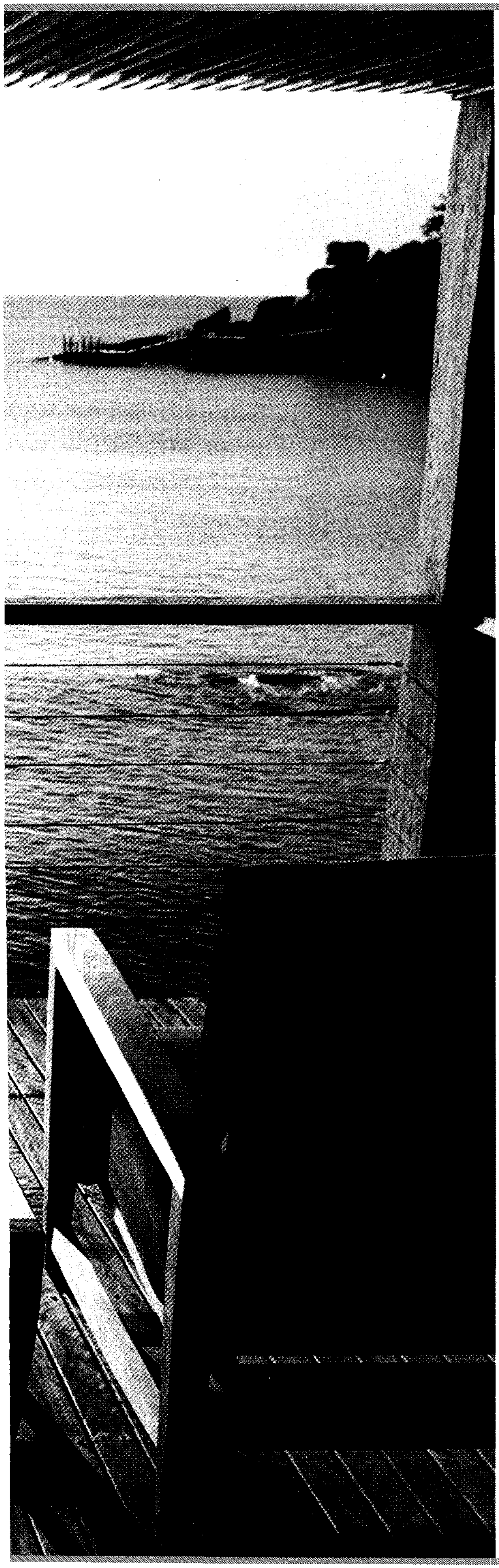
NEW YORK BEVERLY HILLS CHICAGO BUENOS AIRES DUBAI TOKYO
HONG KONG LONDON PARIS MILAN MOSCOW

RALPHLAUREN.COM




Dreams are good.
Realities are better.

© 2007 Citigroup Inc. Citi and Arc Design is a registered service mark of Citigroup Inc. Citi and Let's Get It Done are service marks of Citigroup Inc.



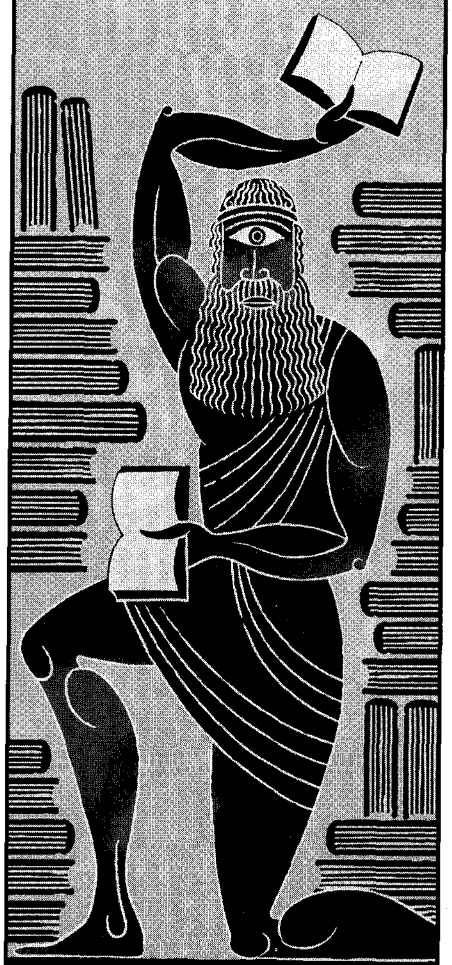
What if today were Someday? The day you got to buy your dream house. The day you got to take your company global. Or the day you got to start your own business. Well, today is Someday. Because no matter what your dream is, or how seemingly impossible, we have the resources to help you succeed: financial guidance, capital, loans, credit cards, innovative ideas and services. Together, these resources add up to one Citi, with one goal – turning your dreams into realities. Today is Someday. Citi. Let's get it done.

citi.com/letsgetitdone

citi® let's get it done℠

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRICES SO LOW YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYE



Daedalus Books

The Best Browse in Bargain Books

For a free catalog call
1.800.395.2665
salebooks.com

THE NEW YORKER

OCTOBER 1, 2007

10 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

37 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Hendrik Hertzberg on Hillary's health-care plan; Janet Reno; Indiana Jones's books.

Nick Paumgarten 44 OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS
The Mannahatta Project
Re-creating the island of 1609.

Jeffrey Frank 53 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Proclivities

David Remnick 64 LETTER FROM MOSCOW
The Tsar's Opponent
Garry Kasparov takes on Vladimir Putin.

Roberto Bolaño 78 FICTION
"The Insufferable Gaucho"

FALL BOOKS

56 LIFE AND LETTERS
Age Makes a Difference
Philip Roth talks to Hermione Lee.

Louis Menand 88 A CRITIC AT LARGE
Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" revisited.

BOOKS
James Wood 94 *Robert Alter's translation of the Psalms.*
John Updike 98 *Ann Patchett's "Run."*
101 Briefly Noted

THE CRITICS

Hilton Als 102 THE THEATRE
"Scarcity," "100 Saints You Should Know."

Anthony Lane 105 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"The Kingdom," "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford."

POEMS
Deborah Warren 73 "Dream with Flowers and Bowl of Fruit"
Jason Shinder 83 "Living"

COVER *"Stairway to the Stars," by Philippe Petit-Roulet* DRAWINGS *Drew Dernavich, Barbara Smaller, Charles Barsotti, P. C. Vey, Lee Lorenz, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Frank Cotham, Jack Ziegler, David Sipress, William Haefeli, Matthew Diffee* SPOTS *Anders Wenngren*

www.newyorker.com

FUEL EFFICIENCY
E85 ETHANOL
HYBRID
ELECTRIC
FUEL CELL

Gas-friendly to gas-free.

Why pump your fuel when you can grow it? For the last seven years, Chevy™ has been producing vehicles capable of running on a fuel that grows primarily from the good earth and remembers its roots. That fuel is E85 ethanol.* E85 is a mostly renewable fuel source made from U.S.-grown biomaterial, such as corn and other grain products. It's a fuel that can help decrease our dependence on petroleum and burns cleaner than gasoline. E85 fuel generally has a higher octane rating than gasoline, which can result in slightly higher horsepower and torque levels. That's why Chevy has over 1.5 million E85 FlexFuel vehicles on the road today. And we offer more vehicle choices than any other brand. Here's our lineup: Avalanche,® Express,® select models of Impala® and Monte Carlo,® Silverado,® Suburban,® Tahoe,® and Uplander.®† Availability of E85 ethanol varies by state. That's why we have been instrumental in bringing an additional 250 E85 pumps across the nation. But don't worry if there isn't an E85 station near you. These FlexFuel vehicles can run on either gasoline or E85 or a combination of both. Do more. Use less. Find out how at chevy.com

FLEXFUEL
E85 ETHANOL

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

2007 Chevy Silverado shown. *E85 is 85% ethanol, 15% gasoline. For more information or to find an E85 station near you, go to chevy.com/e85. †Limited availability on 2007 Uplander. ©2007 GM Corp. Buckle up, America!

CONTRIBUTORS

James Wood (Books, p. 94), a staff writer, teaches literary criticism at Harvard. His new book, "How Fiction Works," is coming out in the spring.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 37), who writes frequently about politics and policy, is the author of "Politics: Observations & Arguments," which is out in paperback.

Nick Paumgarten (The Talk of the Town, p. 39; "The Mannahatta Project," p. 44) is a staff writer.

Jeffrey Frank (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 53) has been a senior editor at the magazine since 1995. His novel "Trudy Hopedale" came out this summer.

Austin Kelley (The Talk of the Town, p. 42), a freelance writer, edits *The Modern Spectator*, an online sports and culture magazine.

Deborah Warren (Poem, p. 73) is the author of two collections of poetry, "The Size of Happiness" and "Zero Meridian."

Louis Menand (A Critic at Large, p. 88) teaches English at Harvard. His books include "The Metaphysical Club," for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, and "American Studies."

Philip Roth ("Age Makes a Difference," p. 56) is the author of twenty-eight novels, including "Exit Ghost," which comes out next month.

Hermione Lee ("Age Makes a Difference," p. 56), the author of a recent biography of Edith Wharton, is the Goldsmiths' Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford.

Roberto Bolaño (Fiction, p. 78), a Chilean novelist and poet, died in 2003. A translation of his novel "The Savage Detectives" was published in April.

Christian Northeast (Illustration, p. 78) is an illustrator whose work has appeared in several magazines, including *Rolling Stone*.

Jason Shinder (Poem, p. 83) has published two poetry collections, "Every Room We Ever Slept In" and "Among Women." A new book of poems, "Stupid Hope," is due out next year.

John Updike (Books, p. 98) has a new book, "Due Considerations: Essays and Criticism," coming out in November.

Philippe Petit-Roulet (Cover) is an illustrator who lives in Paris. He has been contributing to the magazine since 1992.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

The New Yorker Out Loud: *David Remnick* talks to Garry Kasparov. / *Andy Borowitz* imagines a writerly conversation between O. J. Simpson and Alan Greenspan. / A slide show of images of Manhattan as it looked in 1609. / An audio excerpt from "On the Road: The Original Scroll." / Blogs by *Hendrik Hertzberg*, *George Packer*, and *Dana Goodyear*. / From the archives: *John Updike* on Robert Alter, the journals of *Jack Kerouac*, and photographs by *Sylvia Plachy* from Goings On About Town. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events across the country.

Blended Stubbornly Slowly for Seven Generations.

SINCE 1806
Gosling's
BLACK SEAL
80 PROOF
BERMUDA
BLACK RUM

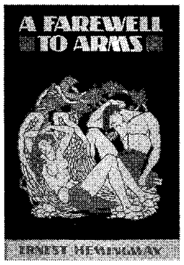
Our emphasis has always been quality not quantity, to achieve a balanced, nuanced flavor with a soft elegance. So, unlike volume rums, don't expect to encounter Gosling's Black Seal on every shelf. But, my oh my, when you do find one, you'll want to s tunity.

Almost as exciting to find as...

www.goslingsrum.com

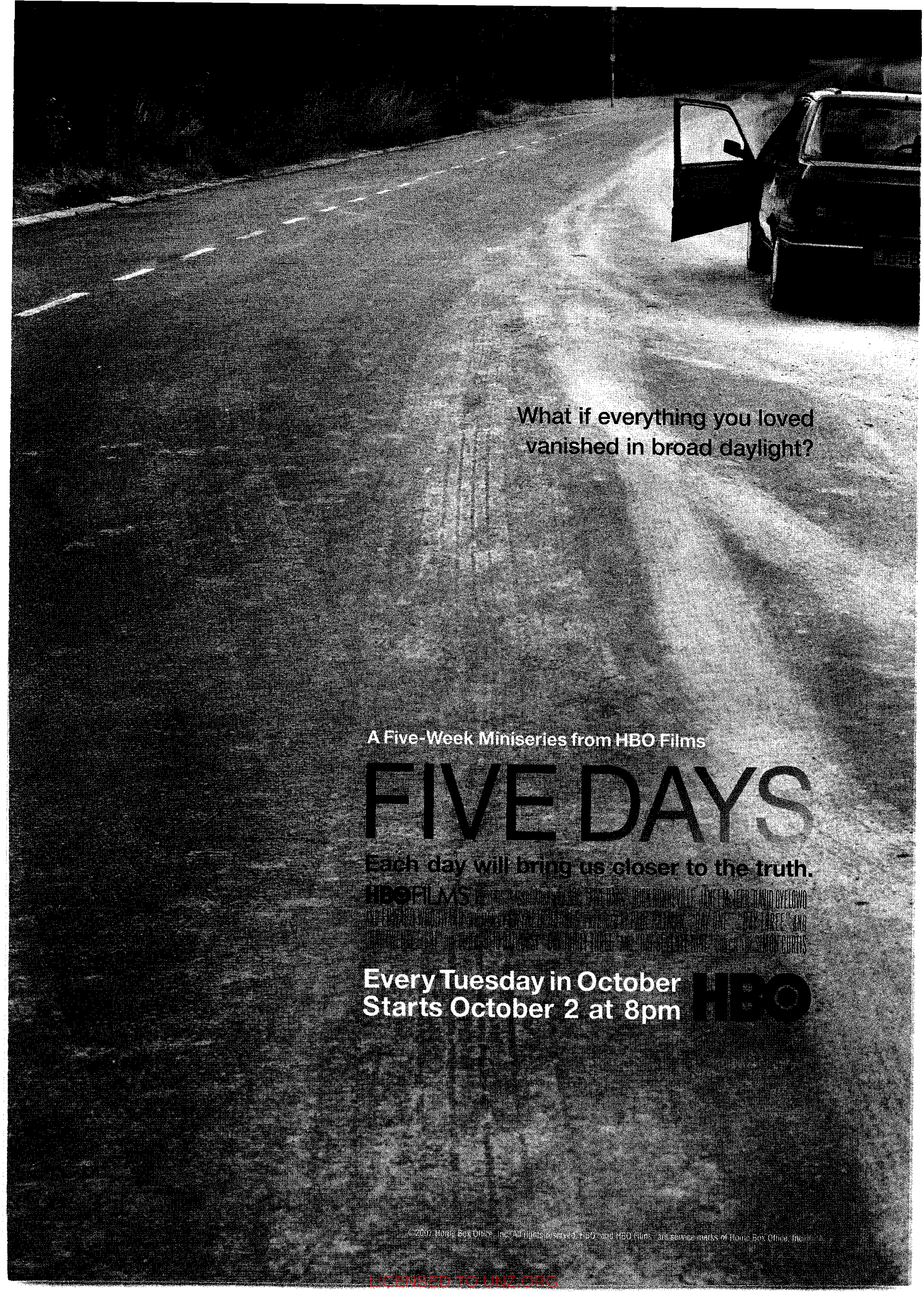
Gosling's Rum.
For Seven Stubborn Generations.

Signed, First Edition,
First Printing. $4,100.00

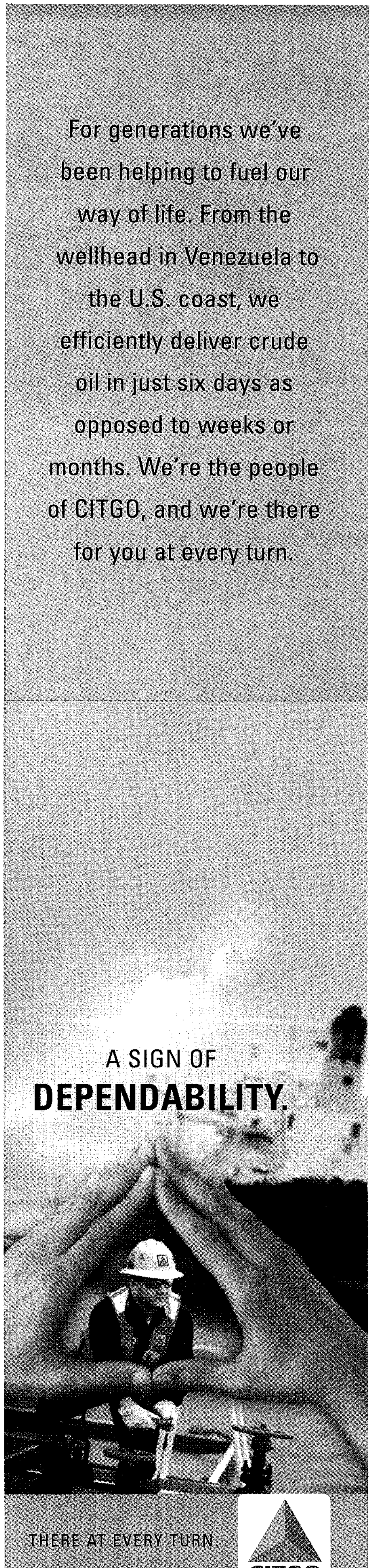


Pristine condition, never opened, all words unread. One of 31,050 copies printed in 1929. Bound in smooth black cloth with gold paper labels. Signed "With sincere best wishes, a close personal friend of Ernest Hemingway."

THE BOOKWORM
Rare deals on Rare books.
283 No. Whittington – N.Y., N.Y.


What if everything you loved
vanished in broad daylight?
A Five-Week Miniseries from HBO Films
FIVE DAYS
Each day will bring us closer to the truth.
HBO FILMS
Every Tuesday in October
Starts October 2 at 8pm
HBO

©2007 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. HBO® and HBO Films® are service marks of Home Box Office, Inc.


For generations we've been helping to fuel our way of life. From the wellhead in Venezuela to the U.S. coast, we efficiently deliver crude oil in just six days as opposed to weeks or months. We're the people of CITGO, and we're there for you at every turn.

A SIGN OF
DEPENDABILITY.

THERE AT EVERY TURN.

CITGO

For in-depth discussion on oil, go to ThinkAboutOil.org

THE MAIL

DON'T CRY

Jerome Groopman, in his article on new theories of the origins of colic and ways to treat it, writes that at a colic clinic in Providence, Rhode Island, a mother of an eight-week-old was told that she needed to "teach" her baby "how to calm herself"; later, Pamela High, a professor of pediatrics at Brown University and the medical director of the clinic, states, "One of the key things we teach moms with colicky babies is that this unhealthy symbiosis must be broken. The baby must learn self-soothing" ("Crybabies," September 17th). This advice reinforces a commonly held belief that attending to children's cries leads to spoiling. But, as a clinical psychologist who works with new mothers, I advise them that eight-week-old infants are not yet able to soothe themselves and that, as research has shown, the best way to produce a securely attached child is to be responsive to the infant's cries. While it is perhaps true that putting a colicky eight-week-old baby down to allow it to cry for five-to-ten minutes may be helpful, and while it will not hurt a normal baby to cry on occasion for a period of time, eight-week-old infants do not yet have the cognitive capacities necessary to soothe themselves when left to cry: these cognitive capacities begin to develop at three-to-six months.

Hannah Hahn
New York City

GREEN ACRES

Adam Gopnik, in his piece on personally experiencing the absurdities and contradictions of the local-food movement, writes that the resurgence of interest in local agriculture is based in part on "implicit anti-urban prejudices" ("New York Local," September 3rd & 10th). I would argue that the concept of local foods is extremely pro-urban. One of the strengths of local-food systems is that they reconnect long-estranged cities and urban residents with the rural hinterlands. Many small farmers in the tristate area, for example, can survive only because of the gourmet tastes and deep pockets of their urban clientele (who else will pay sixteen dollars a pound for salad greens?). To focus on eating local foods as the ultimate goal misses the point that local foods are a vehicle to renew urban interest in, and interaction with, rural issues. Through Greenmarkets and local purveyors, New York City is becoming invested in using its economic and political power to get involved in issues facing America's farmers.

Valerie Imbruce
New York City

WINE AND SYMPATHY

In reading Patrick Radden Keefe's piece on William Koch's attempt to track down the provenance—or lack thereof—of his bottles of wine, I found it difficult to muster much sympathy, if any, for Koch ("The Jefferson Bottles," September 3rd & 10th). One would guess that a billionaire businessman with a Ph.D. would heed the maxim "caveat emptor," and exercise due diligence before spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on old wines of dubious origin. The absurdity is that Koch has no intention of ever drinking much of his "world-class wine collection." He's not a wine collector; he's a collector of old bottles. Perhaps Koch will realize that the wine market operates in much the same way as the market for modern art: both are governed by a law that bestows on formerly valueless objects undeserved and sometimes capricious worth by way of the mysterious process of hype, in this case the million-dollar noses and tongues of people like Robert Parker. An old saying often attributed to P. T. Barnum comes to mind, and it's not "Bon appétit."

John Costo
Owings Mills, Md.

•

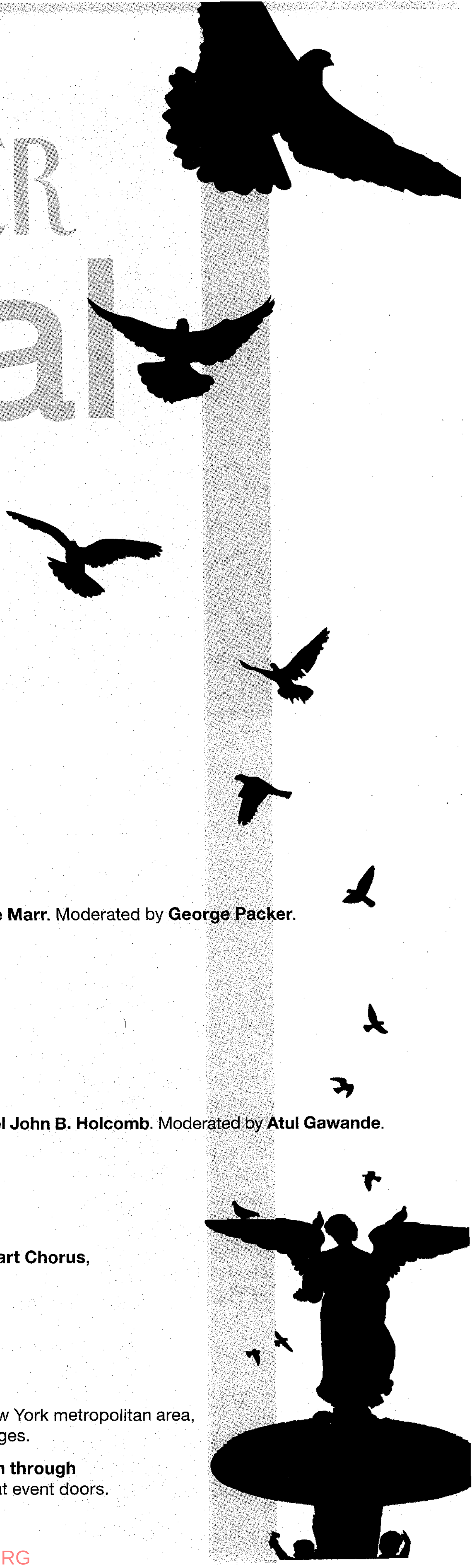
Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

Advertisement

THE NEW YORKER Festival

October 5|6|7

New York City



Just Added

Saturday Night Movie: "Encounters at the End of the World"
Followed by a conversation between **Werner Herzog** and **Daniel Zalewski**.

Saturday, October 6th, 7:30 P.M.
Ailey Citigroup Theatre, Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)
405 West 55th Street

Tickets on sale now.

Tickets Still Available

The New Yorker Town Hall Meeting: Iraq Revisited
With **Ali Abdul-Amir Allawi**, **Jon Lee Anderson**, **David Kilcullen**, and **Phebe Marr**. Moderated by **George Packer**.
Friday, October 5th, 7 P.M.

A New Yorker Dance Party
Hosted by **Sasha Frere-Jones**, with special guest d.j. **Diplo**
Friday, October 5th, 10 P.M.

Matthew Bourne and Joan Acocella
Saturday, October 6th, 1 P.M.

Casualties of War
With **Major L. Tammy Duckworth**, **Captain (Ret.) Dawn Halfaker**, and **Colonel John B. Holcomb**. Moderated by **Atul Gawande**.
Saturday, October 6th, 1 P.M.

Rosanne Cash talks with Hendrik Hertzberg: A Conversation with Music
Saturday, October 6th, 7:30 P.M.

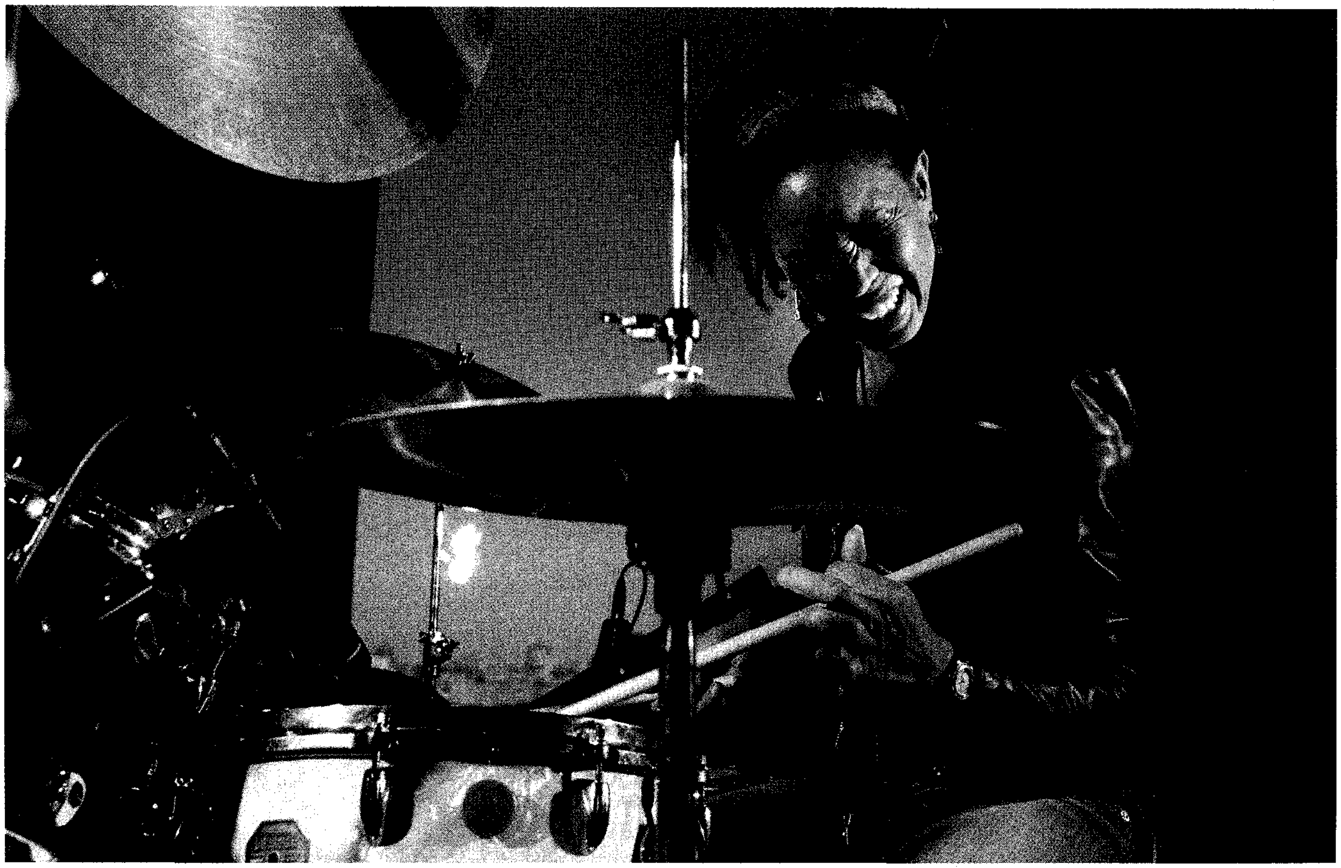
David Byrne Presents: How New Yorkers Ride Bikes
Featuring **Yves Béhar**, **Jan Gehl**, **Buck Henry**, **Calvin Trillin**, the **Young@Heart Chorus**, and surprise guests.
Saturday, October 6th, 7:30 P.M.

And more!

For information, visit **festival.newyorker.com**.

Tickets available online at ticketmaster.com, at all *ticketmaster* outlets in the New York metropolitan area, or by calling 877.391.0545. All Ticketmaster orders are subject to service charges.

Please note: Tickets will also be sold **during Festival weekend, October 5th through October 7th**, at Festival Headquarters, located at 125 West 18th Street, and at event doors. For more information, visit **festival.newyorker.com**.



The jazz drummer Cindy Blackman, at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. Photograph by Brian Finke.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	26	27	28	29

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

Margaret Cho embraces her inner belly dancer in a new variety show, "The Sensuous Woman," which features not only Cho's comedy act but also live music and burlesque performers, such as Miss Dirty Martini. The show starts its four-week run at the Zipper Theatre. (See page 13.)

NIGHT LIFE
PLAYING FOR KEEPS

The young singer Devendra Banhart's mischievous approach to the traditional singer-songwriter genre is placing him in the pantheon of American pop eccentrics; earlier this year, David Byrne picked him to headline a show at Carnegie Hall. Banhart has a stellar new album, "Smokey Rolls Down Thunder Canyon," and a show at the Grand Ballroom at the Manhattan Center. (See page 16.)

ART
DARK PRINCE

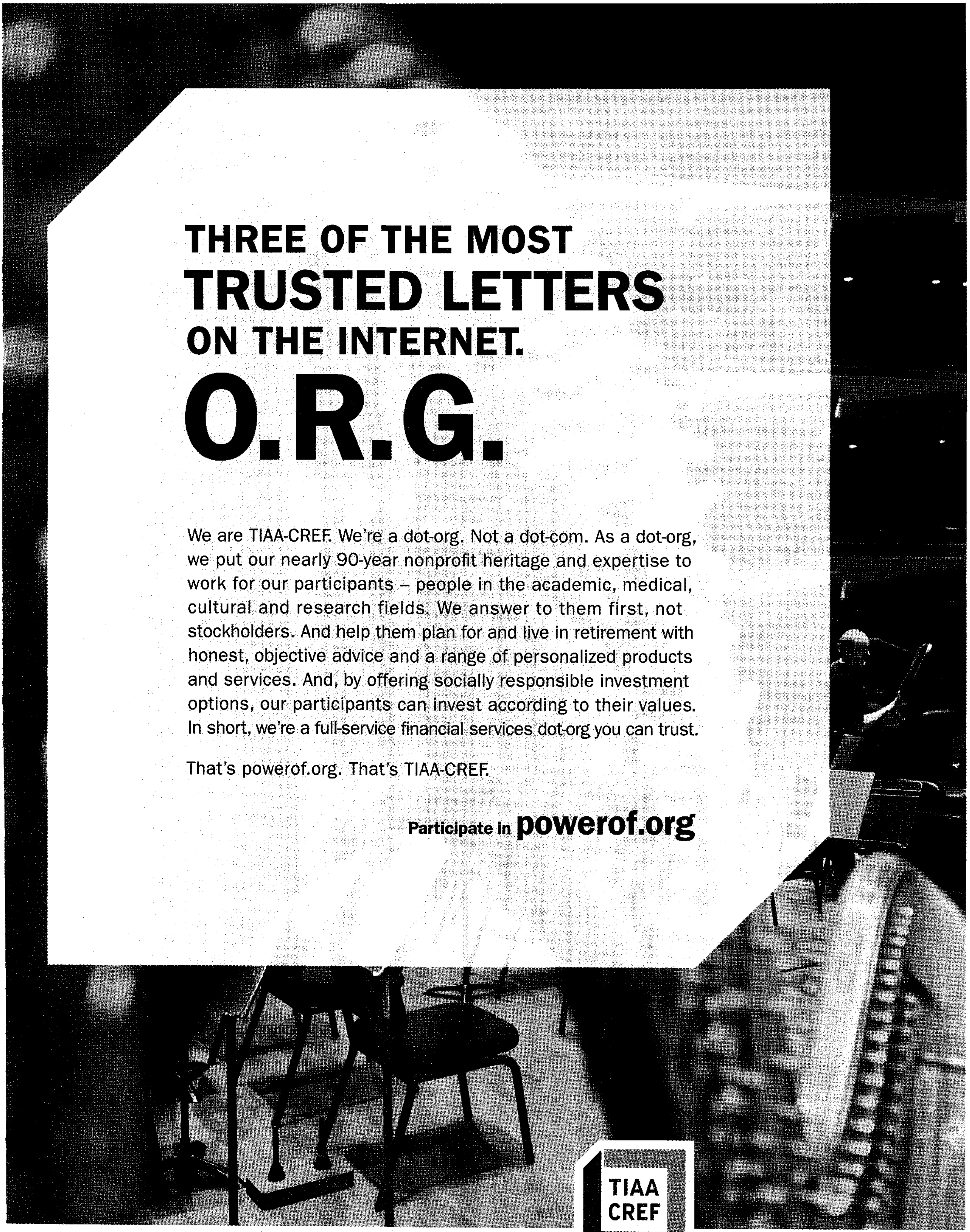
He photographs, paints, and makes sculptures, but Richard Prince's medium might best be described as cool. His retrospective at the Guggenheim includes pictures of cowboys, paintings of nurses, and sculptures of muscle-car hoods. (See page 19.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
SOUND WAVES

The French Institute-Alliance Française's fall festival, "Crossing the Line," features "Nouvelles Vagues," a concert in which the Traffic Quintet performs radically condensed versions of scores from fifteen classic New Wave films. (See page 26.)

MOVIES
THE REIGN IN SPAIN

Under the Franco regime, the director Pere Portabella blended over-the-top genre filmmaking with avant-garde subjectivity to create ingeniously subversive political films. In 1972, Portabella's passport was seized, preventing him from presenting his work in the United States. MOMA now welcomes him for a long-overdue retrospective that includes the brave "El Sopar," from 1974, which features five former political prisoners discussing their imprisonment, and his latest, "The Silence Before Bach." (See page 31.)


THREE OF THE MOST
TRUSTED LETTERS
ON THE INTERNET.
O.R.G.

We are TIAA-CREF. We're a dot-org. Not a dot-com. As a dot-org, we put our nearly 90-year nonprofit heritage and expertise to work for our participants – people in the academic, medical, cultural and research fields. We answer to them first, not stockholders. And help them plan for and live in retirement with honest, objective advice and a range of personalized products and services. And, by offering socially responsible investment options, our participants can invest according to their values. In short, we're a full-service financial services dot-org you can trust.

That's powerof.org. That's TIAA-CREF.

Participate in **powerof.org**

FINANCIAL SERVICES TIAA CREF FOR THE GREATER GOOD®

A-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, and Teachers Personal Investors Services, Inc., Member FINRA, distribute securities products. Advisory services are provided by Advice and Planning Services, division of TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, a registered investment advisor.
onsider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing. Call 877 518-9161 or visit tiaa-cref.org r a current prospectus that contains this and other information. Read it carefully before investing.
8878 © 2007 Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), New York, NY 10017.

Advertisement

COLLEGE CAMPUSES COAST TO COAST

FALL CULTURAL CALENDAR

University of Illinois • Urbana-Champaign

Merce Cunningham Dance Company: "eyeSpace"

October 9th, 7:30 P.M. • krannertcenter.org

The choreographer Merce Cunningham's newest work engages viewers in an interactive adventure. Upon entering the auditorium, audience members are outfitted with iPods containing ten shuffled tracks of a Mikel Rouse score. While they listen to their individual tracks, dancers move to an urban environmental soundscape.

University of Florida • Gainesville

Rinde Eckert: "Horizon"

October 16th–18th, 7:30 P.M. • performingarts.ufl.edu

A finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Rinde Eckert wears many artistic hats, including songwriter, librettist, and experimental theatre actor. In his latest musical rumination, directed by David Schweizer, Eckert takes on the role of a theologian struggling with his faith.

The University of Washington • Seattle

Vienna Piano Trio

October 17th, 8 P.M. • uwworldseries.org

The Vienna Piano Trio is championed internationally for its spirited, often electrifying performances. The piano-violin-cello chamber group (often hailed as a presumptive heir to the Beaux Arts Trio) enchants with a program of works by Haydn, Korngold, and Schubert.

The University of Arizona • Tucson

Shaolin Warriors

October 18th, 7:30 P.M. • uapresents.com

With agility, grace, and mental acuity, more than forty Buddhist monks of China's Shaolin Temple perform breathtaking kung fu feats in a theatrical performance that offers a rare glimpse into their daily regimen of rigorous martial-arts training and meditation.

Stanford University • Stanford, California

Dianne Reeves with Esperanza Spalding

October 19th, 8 P.M. • livelyarts.stanford.edu

Crowned 2007's top female jazz vocalist by *DownBeat* critics, Dianne Reeves soars and swings through new songs from her upcoming album as well as standards she sang in the film "Good Night, and Good Luck." Upstart bassist/vocalist Esperanza Spalding buoyantly opens.

Yale University • New Haven, Connecticut

"Trouble in Mind" by Alice Childress

Directed by Irene Lewis

October 26th–November 17th (times vary) • yalerep.org

Before her acclaimed 1973 novel, "A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich," writer and actor Alice Childress received critical praise in the mid-nineteen fifties for her play "Trouble in Mind." Based on the author's own experiences, this is the story of a black actor struggling to maintain her artistic dignity.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sam Bush/Jerry Douglas/Edgar Meyer

November 4th, 2 P.M. • carolinaperformingarts.org

Bona-fide masters of their instruments, the mandolin-and-fiddle maven Sam Bush, the dobro doyen Jerry Douglas, and the bass maestro Edgar Meyer join together as the consummate roots-music trio, crossing musical genres from bluegrass to classical.

The Pennsylvania State University • University Park

Ballet Argentino: "Boccatango"

November 9th, 8 P.M. • cpa.psu.edu

The Argentine superstar and former American Ballet Theatre principal Julio Bocca leads his Ballet Argentino in a revue-style work infused with tango and drawing from ballet and modern dance. Dancers share the stage with a small orchestra, two vocalists, and Bocca himself, partnering with women, men, and even a stepladder.

State University of New York at Oswego

Songs of the Spirit

November 13th, 8 P.M. • oswego.edu/arts

The interfaith, multiethnic Songs of the Spirit concert series of music and spoken word spotlights disparate acts that range from a Kenyan children's choir and a group of Tibetan monks to the folk hero Odetta and South African jazz star Hugh Masekela.

Purchase College, State University of New York

Ronald K. Brown/Evidence: "One Shot"

November 16th–17th, 8 P.M. • artscenter.org

Directed by the choreographer Ronald K. Brown, Evidence fuses African, modern, ballet, and hip-hop dance styles to tell compelling stories of human struggles and triumphs. Included in the opening-night program is "One Shot" (a New York première to be performed November 16th only), inspired by the noted photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris's talent for capturing the essence of his subjects in one frame.

PRESENTED BY

FINANCIAL SERVICES TIAA CREF FOR THE GREATER GOOD®

FROM TOP © CAROLINA PERFORMING ARTS © GABRIELE KOCH © GRAAB © CONCERTED EFFORTS

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

THE CHILDREN OF VONDERLY
Ma-Yi Theatre Company opens its nineteenth season with a new play by Lloyd Suh, about a multiethnic family of adopted and disabled children in Indianapolis. In previews. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

DIVIDING THE ESTATE
Primary Stages presents the New York première of a comedy by Horton Foote, set in the late nineteen-eighties, in which a Texas family contemplates its fate. In previews. Opens Sept. 27. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE GOLDMAN PROJECT
Staci Swedeen wrote this drama, about a Holocaust survivor. Joe Brancato directs. Previews begin Sept. 28. (Abingdon, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

GREETINGS FROM YORKVILLE
A Midwestern songwriting duo arrives in the Big Apple, in this musical by Robert Grusecki. Direction by the late Thommie Walsh; art design by Robert Risko. In previews. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

JUMP
The U.S. début of this Korean show of acrobatics and slapstick, set among a family whose members love to challenge one another to martial-arts showdowns. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100.)

MARGARET CHO'S THE SENSUOUS WOMAN
The comedian hosts a burlesque-inspired variety show in celebration of women's bodies. In previews. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-352-3101.)

MAURITIUS
Alison Pill, F. Murray Abraham, Dylan Baker, Katie Finneran, and Bobby Cannavale star in Manhattan Theatre Club's production of a drama by Theresa Rebeck, about half sisters who inherit a stamp collection. Doug Hughes directs. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

MEDEIA
Dood Paard (Dead Horse), a company from Amsterdam, presents its version of "Medea." Sept. 26-30. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

MINIMUM WAGE
An a-cappella musical about the employees of a fast-food burger joint, written by Sean Altman and Charlie and Jeff LaGreca. Guy Stroman directs. Previews begin Sept. 28. (The Green Room, 45 Bleecker St. 212-239-6200.)

NIGHT OVER TAOS
Estelle Parsons directs this Intar production of a drama by Maxwell Anderson, about Pablo Montoya, who, in 1847, fought to protect Mexico from being ceded to the U.S. In previews. Opens Oct. 1. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 212-352-3101.)

NONE OF THE ABOVE
Jenny Lyn Bader wrote this play, about getting into Princeton. Julie Kramer directs. In previews. (Lion, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE OVERWHELMING
Roundabout Theatre Company presents J. T. Rogers's drama, about an American family living in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. Previews begin Sept. 28. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

PYGMALION
Claire Danes and Jefferson Mays star in Shaw's classic drama, in a Roundabout Theatre Company production. David Grindley directs. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

THE RISE OF DOROTHY HALE
Myra Bairstow wrote this drama, based on the true story of the mysterious suicide of a Manhattan society woman in 1933. Penny Templeton directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 30. (St. Luke's Theatre, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

HONORING
DAVID HALBERSTAM
Join his Esteemed Colleagues for a Special Presentation
of this Definitive History of the Korean War.

TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 25

NEW YORK, NY
New York TimesTalks
Panel led by Leslie Gelb
with W. Stueck,
D. Oberdorfer, D. Filkins,
F. FitzGerald & M. Trainor
The Times Center
6:30 PM – sold out

PORTLAND, ME
Adam Hochschild
& Geoffrey Wolff
Books Etc., Falmouth
6:30 PM

MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MA
Ward Just
Bunch of Grapes
7:30 PM

CHICAGO, IL
John Callaway
& Alex Kotlowitz
The Book Stall at
Chestnut Court, Winnetka
7:00 PM

MILWAUKEE, WI
Anna Quindlen
Harry W. Schwartz
Bookshops, Shorewood
7:00 PM

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Cynthia Gorney
Book Passage, Corte Madera
7:00 PM

SAN DIEGO, CA
Bill Walton
Warwicks
7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 26

WASHINGTON, DC
Neil Sheehan
Borders Books & Music
7:00 PM

GREENWICH, CT
Frank Deford
& Frank McCourt
Just Books at Arcadia Coffee
7:30 PM

THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 27

PHILADELPHIA, PA
Buzz Bissinger
& Paul Hendrickson
Borders Books & Music
7:00 PM

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 29

WASHINGTON, DC
National Book Festival
Veterans History Project
with R. Hockley,
L. Farnum, R. Raybould,
C. Hayward & P. McGee
Library of Congress
1:30 PM

MONDAY
OCTOBER 8

NASHVILLE, TN
John Seigenthaler &
John M. Seigenthaler
Davis Kidd
6:00 PM

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 13

NANTUCKET, MA
Nathaniel Philbrick
Nantucket Atheneum
7:00 PM

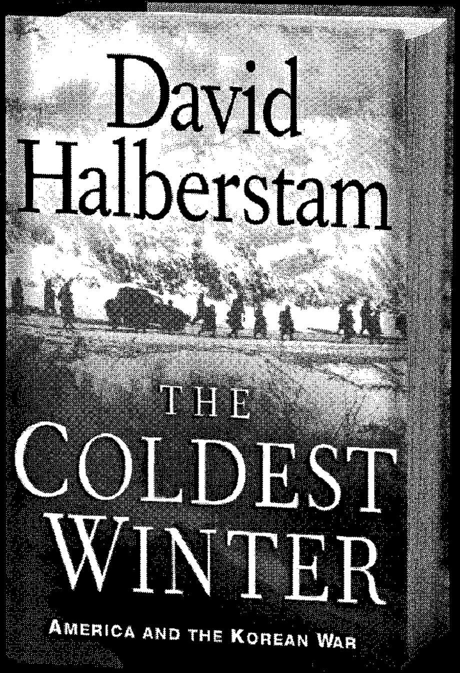
MONDAY
OCTOBER 15

NEW YORK, NY
Robert A. Caro,
Joan Didion,
Robert MacNeil,
Jon Meacham
& Gay Talese
Barnes & Noble
7:00 PM

Watch for the Out of the Book™ film profiling David Halberstam and *The Coldest Winter*, coming to 75 cities in November and December 2007.

ON SALE NOW
DAVIDHALBERSTAMBOOKS.COM
HYPERION

Also available on CD and downloadable audio from Hyperion Audiobooks and on eBook.
Hyperion ebook HYPERION AUDIOBOOKS



David
Halberstam
COLDEST
WINTER

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
ABOUT A BOY

The French director François Truffaut made a number of films about Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud)—a fictional figure, but heavily laced with traces of Truffaut himself. The first in the series, "The 400 Blows," from 1959, is still the best; indeed, time has fortified this sharp, slender account of a misbegotten boyhood into one of the unassailable monuments of French cinema. Even if you know it well, you should make the pilgrimage to Film Forum, where it runs from September 26th to October 9th, together with a delectable short sequel from 1962, "Antoine and Colette" (also starring Léaud). Revisiting "The 400 Blows" is like probing your own past, because the mood of it won't stay still; something you recall as dolorous turns out to be a lark, whereas the glee of a trip to the movies and a strawberry ice with your parents melts so fast that it breaks your heart. Like "Madame Bovary" and "Le Grand Meaulnes," the film begins in a schoolroom; why should it be there, and not at home, that so many French fates are determined?

—*Anthony Lane*

THIERRY GUITARD

THE RITZ
Roundabout Theatre Company revives Terrence McNally's 1975 comedy, starring Rosie Perez and Kevin Chamberlin, in which a heterosexual man hides from a mobster in a gay bathhouse. Joe Mantello directs. In previews. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THREE MO' TENORS
This musical revue, conceived, directed, and choreographed by Marion J. Caffey, combines opera, blues, jazz, soul, and other genres. In previews. Opens Sept. 27. (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE YOUNG LADIES OF
Taylor Mac wrote and performs this piece based on letters sent to his father, who was stationed in Vietnam in 1968, by women responding to an ad he had placed in an Australian newspaper. Preview Sept. 26. Opens Sept. 27. (HERE Arts Center, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

NOW PLAYING

AMERICAN SLIGO
Adam Rapp ("Red Light Winter") wrote and directs this dark comedy, about a wrestling legend on the eve of his last match. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

BLIND MOUTH SINGING
National Asian American Theatre Company presents Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas's play about a strict matriarch. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave. 212-279-4200.)

CELIA
Carmen Rivera and Candido Tirado wrote this musical, based on the life of the late Cuban singer Celia Cruz. Jaime Azpilicueta directs. Performances on Saturdays at 5 and Sundays at 7 are in English; all other performances are in Spanish. (New World Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE DINING ROOM
The Keen Company opens its season with A. R. Gurney's drama, a series of vignettes about a twentieth-century Wasp family. Jonathan Silverstein directs. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

FLAGS
The pseudonymous playwright Jane Martin uses conventions of Greek tragedy, including a chorus, to tell the story of an American family who lose a son in the Iraq war. When Eddie Desmopoulis, a patriot and recovering alcoholic (Chris Mulkey), Em, his wife (Karen Landry), and their younger son, Frankie (Ryan Johnston), learn disturbing details about the death, Eddie demands an apology from the President and mounts a tattered, upside-down flag on his roof. This action creates a public outcry—Em is spat upon, Frankie is severely beaten, the house is shot at. Strong performances by the talented cast cannot entirely redeem the melodramatic format, which ultimately distorts the story's inherent power. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through Sept. 30.)

HAMLET
Shepard Sobel directs Shakespeare's tragedy, at the Pearl. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

100 SAINTS YOU SHOULD KNOW
Playwrights Horizons kicks off the season with the world première of a play by Kate Fodor. (Reviewed in this issue.) (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through Sept. 30.)

KING LEAR
In his swift-paced, crisp production for the Royal Shakespeare Company (in a sold-out run at BAM's Harvey Theatre, in repertory with "The Seagull"), Trevor Nunn stages a crowd-pleasing tragedy chock full of Old Master tableaux, swordplay, music, and thunderclaps. But all the pageantry falls away when the singular Ian McKellen comes into view. His Lear—endlessly changeable, always arresting—is a virile man in the active throes of decay and, more touchingly, an innocent grappling with introspection for the first time. McKellen finds new inflections in the well-worn lines, making Lear's familiar wounds feel raw again. And if the capable but uneven supporting cast can't always transcend the showy surroundings, the actors—led by Jonathan Hyde, playing a worthy Kent, and Sylvester McCoy, with his haunting Fool—do alight on moments of striking lucidity. (651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through Sept. 30.)

THE MAGNIFICENT CUCKOLD
East River Commedia presents this 1920 farce by Fernand Crommelynck, in which a man is so paranoid that his wife might cheat on him that he forces her to do so with all the men in the village. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

THE MISANTHROPE
New York Theatre Workshop presents Molière's comedy, directed by Ivo van Hove. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
More than thirty new musicals, at various venues. For a full schedule, visit www.nymf.org. (212-352-3101.)

THE POWER OF DARKNESS
Mint Theatre Company revives Tolstoy's drama from 1886, about a Russian peasant who becomes involved in a murder. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

ROCK DOVES
The première of a drama by Marie Jones, set in postwar Northern Ireland. Ian McElhinney directs. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

SCARCITY
Atlantic Theatre Company presents the première of a new play by Lucy Thurber. (Reviewed in this issue.) (336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE SEAGULL
Trevor Nunn directs Chekhov's drama (for the Royal Shakespeare Company, in repertory with "King Lear" at BAM's Harvey Theatre), about a clutch of wealthy Russian bohemians in the late nineteenth century who congregate at a country estate. As the fading actress Arkadina, Frances Barber skillfully brings a petulant unlikability to her role, and Gerald Kyd, as her young lover, the best-selling author Trigorin, has the slithery ease of an Eastern European night-club singer. As Masha, the head servant's daughter, Monica Dolan lends a trenchant depth that many of the other actors lack. The resulting show is more drawing-room farce than tragedy. (651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through Sept. 29.)

TILL THE BREAK OF DAWN
This occasionally funny but mostly wearisome comedy follows a group of self-styled urban activists from New York City to a hip-hop festival in Cuba, where they are forced to confront and reëvaluate their notions of radicalism and privilege. Billed as a "hip-hop play," the show, with its high-energy humor, seems to bear a closer resemblance to the comedies of Neil Simon. The writer and director, the downtown performer Danny Hoch, attempts to tackle everything from race politics to gentrification to 9/11, but he misses the subtleties of the play's true subject matter: culture shock and the commercial romanticization of radicalism. (Abrons Arts Center, 466 Grand St. 212-352-3101.)

Also Playing

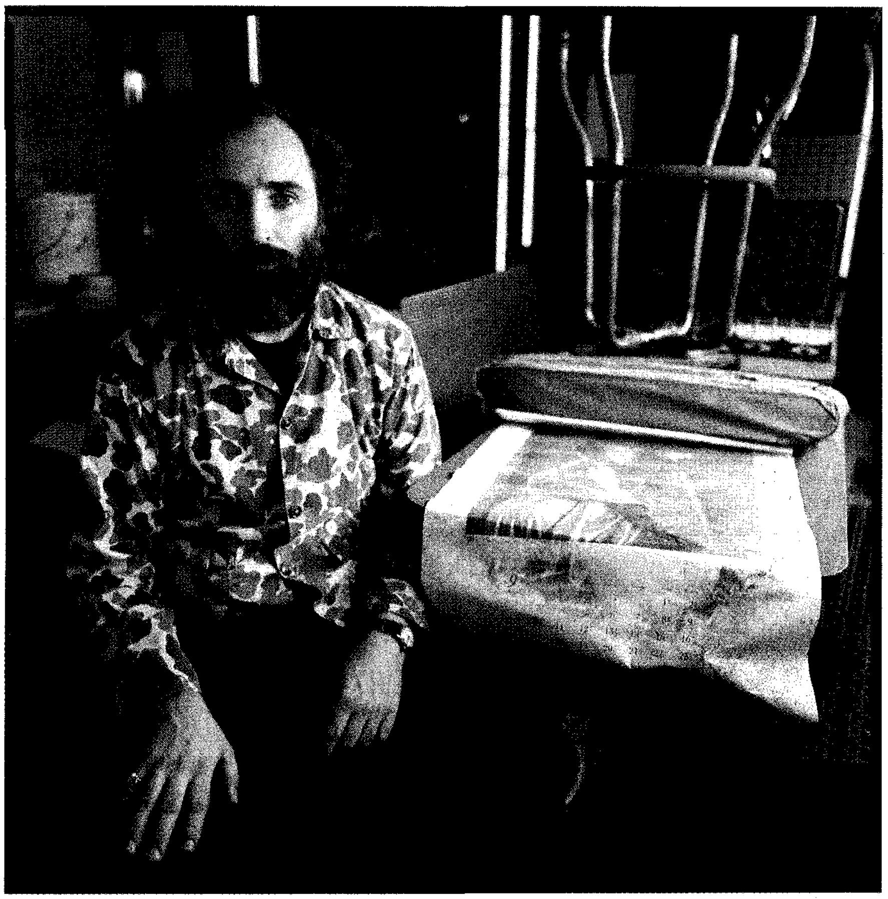
ABSINTHE: South Street Seaport, Pier 17. 212-279-4200. Through Sept. 30. **AMERICA LOVESEXDEATH:** Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. Through Sept. 29. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE BRIG:** Living Theatre, 19-21 Clinton St. 212-352-3101. Through Sept. 30. **A CHORUS LINE:** Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CURTAINS:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **EDGE:** ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 212-352-3101. **GONE MISSING:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **IPHIGENIA 2.0:** Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **MASKED:** DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **TINGS DEY HAPPEN:** Culture Project, 55 Mercer St. 212-352-3101. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

NYC 1.877.70.DGUSA
WWW.DOLCEGABBANA.IT
DOLCE & GABBANA

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Sept. 27: As the front man for Free, Bad Company, the Firm, and, most recently, a new incarnation of Queen, **Paul Rodgers** is one of the more ubiquitous singers in rock. He's also an unshakable radio mainstay—does a day (or even an hour) go by in this country without an airing of Free's signature anthem, "All Right Now"?



Mike Nelson in his labyrinthine installation "Psychic Vacuum," at Creative Time.

BLENDER THEATRE AT GRAMERCY
127 E. 23rd St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 26: The Portuguese vocalist **Sara Tavares.** Sept. 27-28: **José González,** who was born in Sweden to Argentinean parents, plays the acoustic guitar with commanding grace and sings, in English, sultry songs that are sad and uplifting at the same time.

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Sept. 29-30: The Louisiana native **Lucinda Williams** has long incorporated a wide range of musical styles into her repertoire—from folk to blues to country to rock. She's in town performing a career retrospective. Here she's playing songs from her albums "World Without Tears" (2003) and "Essence" (2001), and at Town Hall she's tackling three others from her back catalogue. Sept. 26: The thrash-metal titans **Megadeth.**

GRAND BALLROOM
Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 27: **Devendra Banhart,** a Texas native who grew up in Venezuela and California, has become one of the leaders of what is known as the freak-folk movement. With his new album, "Smokey Rolls Down Thunder Canyon," he stands poised to take his rightful place as an iconic pop-music maestro, if an eccentric one. The album, which was recorded at his home studio (found with the help of a tarot-card reader) in the artists' haven of Topanga, California, glows and sparkles like the L.A. cityscape at night. It is a broad collection of folk-rock songs with elements of samba, doo-wop, and, of course, psychedelia. Banhart himself, a long-haired and bearded presence, comes off as a cross between Caetano Veloso and Jim Morrison.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Sept. 27: The **Plastic People of the Universe** make a somewhat rare New York City appearance. The Czech underground rock band has a storied history: the group's 1976 arrest and prosecution helped motivate the playwright Vaclav Havel and other artists and intellectuals to form Charter 77, the human-rights-manifesto-cum-movement that laid the groundwork for the Velvet Revolution, more than a decade later. (The group figures prominently in Tom Stoppard's play "Rock 'n' Roll," which comes to New York next month.)

JOE'S PUB IN THE PARK
Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. (212-967-7555)—Sept. 26: The indie-pop band **Beirut,** whose 2006 album of unabashedly charming Gypsy rock, "Gulag Orkestar," broke out of the blogosphere to achieve mainstream acclaim, is led by the young multi-instrumentalist and crooner Zack Condon. His continued romance with Old World styles and the work of Jacques Brel comes through on the band's new release, "The Flying Club Cup." With the hip-hop-inflected Mediterranean dancehall music of **Balkan Beat Box,** which is led by Tamir Muskat and Ori Kaplan.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Sept. 26: The Sonic Youth front man, **Thurston Moore,** breaks out songs from his new solo record, "Trees Outside the Academy." The album's mostly lyric-driven rock songs are played by, among others, Sonic Youth's drummer, Steve Shelley, and the violinist Samara Lubelski. It also features the Dinosaur Jr. guitarist J Mascis, the vocalist Christina Carter, and recordings of the thirteen-year-old Moore making sounds with household objects in his Bethel, Connecticut, bedroom. Sept. 27: **Medeski Martin & Wood,** the jazz-funk trio and jam-band phenomenon, stretches its legs. The group's members are coming off touring with the guitarist John Scofield, with whom they recorded last year's album "Out Louder." Sept. 29: **José González** (see Blender Theatre at Gramercy).

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
1 Bowling Green—Sept. 29: *Good* magazine, a glossy publication with a refreshingly nonpartisan approach to doing what its name implies, celebrates its first anniversary with a party featuring d.j.s sure to draw a crowd from the young demographic that advertisers covet—**Jeremy Greenspan,** from Junior Boys, **A.D.J.,** which is three-quarters of the Brazilian Girls, and others. (For reservations, which are required, visit www.goodmagazine.com.)

REBAR
147 Front St., Brooklyn (718-797-2322)—Sept. 28: The feisty Brooklyn-based **Hungry March Band,** once dubbed "Best Anarchist Parade Band" by a downtown weekly, lights into songs from its new CD, "Portable Soundtracks for Temporary Utopias." (This show caps a week of performances around the city. For information on those nightly shows, the details of which will be made public the night before each date, visit www.hungrymarchband.com.)

TOWN HALL
123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824)—Sept. 26: **Steve Earle** was angering the country-music community with his leftist politics long before the Dixie Chicks did. The self-avowed rocking rebel will be joined by another alt-country artist, **Allison Moorer,** Earle's sixth wife (and seventh marriage; he tied the knot twice with one woman). Sept. 30: **Iron & Wine** is Sam Beam, a fine acoustic guitarist with a fiercely bushy beard. He delivers his revivalist songs with a breathy, hushed voice. Oct. 2-4: **Lucinda Williams** (see the Fillmore New York at Irving Plaza) plays music from her albums "Car Wheels on a Gravel Road" (1998), "Sweet Old World" (1990), and her self-titled release (1988).

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (212-307-7171)—Sept. 29: The wonderfully nuanced, narcotic pop of the **Sea and Cake,** which is touring in support of its new release, "Everybody."

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Sept. 28: **Eleggua,** an all-female collection of drummers from Venezuela. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

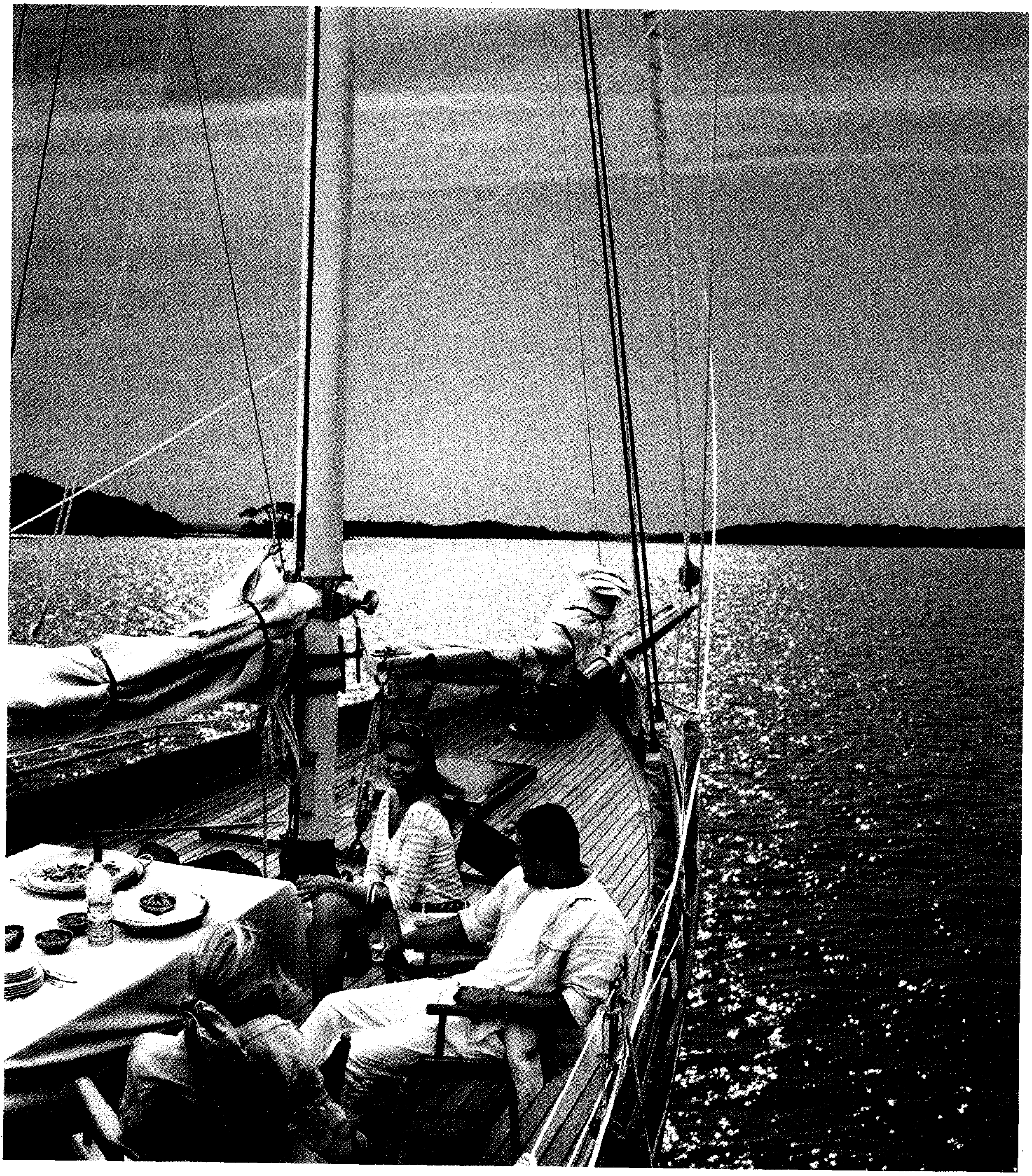
ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Oct. 13: The Broadway veteran **KT Sullivan,** in a program of hits from the heyday of the Great White Way.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Sept. 26-29: The jazz master **Pat Martino** personifies an era when guitar stylists found inspiration in the soulful elegance of Wes Montgomery as well as the modal excursions of John Coltrane and Miles Davis. Time may have taken the edge off his exploratory impulses, but Martino remains a crafty classicist.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Sept. 27-30: The agile vocalist **Rachelle Ferrell,** who has jazz training and R. & B. experience.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Sept. 25-30: Last month, **Renee Rosnes** married Bill Charlap at this very club, and she returns for the Diet Coke Women in Jazz Festival, borrowing her hus-

MICHAL CHELBIN



GREY GOOSE
VODKA
DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN FRANCE
IMPORTED

Sip Responsibly. ©2007 GREY GOOSE AND GREY GOOSE AND DESIGN ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS AND THE FLYING GOOSE DEVICE IS A TRADEMARK. IMPORTED BY GREY GOOSE IMPORTING COMPANY, MIAMI, FL. VODKA 40% ALC. BY VOL.–DISTILLED FROM GRAIN.

ON DISCERNING TASTE

OYSTERS

BEST ORDERED IN MONTHS that contain the letter 'R' and always best when local, bracingly fresh and shared with the table. Sauces and garnish are a matter of personal preference but are best used sparingly. When accompanied by an icy shot, straight up, oysters are a wildly delicious way to satisfy the cocktail hour.

GREY GOOSE
World's Best Tasting Vodka

band's bassist, **Peter Washington.** She may now be part of a jazz-world royal couple, but she remains her own woman stylistically, easily traversing modal and modern jazz forms that Charlap displays little interest in exploring. The saxophonist **Chris Potter** and the drummer **Lewis Nash** round out her exceptional quartet. Oct. 1: The festival comes to a close with **Gretchen Parlato,** the winner of the 2004 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition and the recipient of effusive praise from both Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—In the late forties, the legendary, star-crossed Bud Powell translated the language of bebop to the piano, defining the genre for keyboardists ever since. Paying tribute to his wizardry and enduring influence are two long-established stylists: **Cedar Walton** (here on Sept. 27) and **Steve Kuhn** (Sept. 28), and two younger players, **Vijay Iyer** (Sept. 29) and **Rachel Z** (Sept. 30). Each pianist will front a trio. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Sept. 25-26: There are flashier young pianists out there, but few have the poise and historical scope of **Frank Kimbrough,** a mainstay of Maria Schneider's big band. He's joined by the bassist **Jay Anderson** and the masterful drummer **Paul Motian.** Sept. 27-30: **E.S.T.** (the Esbjörn Svensson Trio) is Scandinavia's answer to our Bad Plus Trio: a group of rock-inclusive free spirits eager to venture beyond the boundaries of mainstream jazz.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Sept. 25-30: **Slide Hampton,** a musician's musician who has been turning heads since the late fifties with his trombone playing and equally memorable arranging and composing, takes the stage as a leader of the Trombone All-Stars, featuring **Steve Davis, Jonathan Voltzok,** and **Max Seigel.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"The Age of Rembrandt: Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ **"Bridging East and West: The Chinese Diaspora and Lin Yutang."** Through Feb. 10, 2008. ♦ **"Abstract Expressionism and Other Modern Works: The Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. ♦ **"Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840-1860."** Through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Lines, Grids, Stains, Words."** Through Oct. 22. ♦ **"Present Tense: Photographs by JoAnn Verburg."** Through Nov. 5. ♦ **"Lost Vanguard: Soviet Modernist Architecture, 1922-1932."** Through Oct. 29. ♦ **"James Lee Byars: The Art of Writing."** Through Oct. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Richard Prince: Spiritual America."** Opens Sept. 28. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Rudolf Stingel."** Through Oct. 14. ♦ **"Neither New Nor Correct: Recent Work by Mark Bradford."** Through Nov. 25. ♦ **"Danny Lyon: Montage, Film, and Still Photography."** Through Dec. 2. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns, and Mermaids."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ The recently opened Anne and Bernard Spitzer Hall of Human Origins explores the science of evolution. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

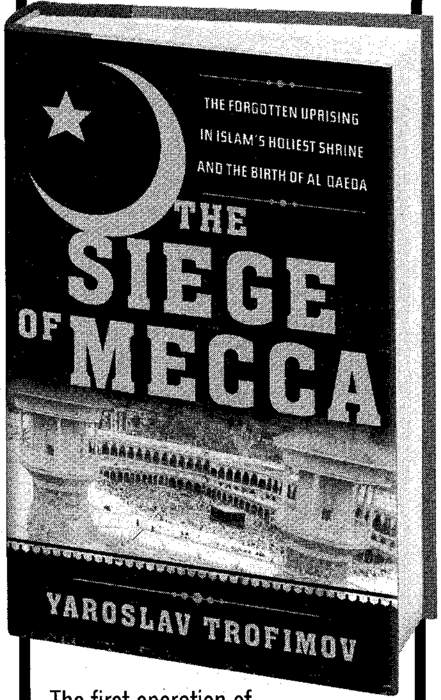
TABLES FOR TWO
BOROUGH FOOD & DRINK

12 E. 22nd St. (212-260-0103)—Borough Food & Drink is a quizzical twist on the "locavore" movement, whose adherents insist on eating food grown close to home. Borough's co-creator and contributing chef, Zak Pelaccio, has assembled a menu that relies primarily on products found in the five boroughs—those raised, assembled, or imported by local purveyors—and that also finds occasional inspiration in various neighborhood or ethnic mainstays, such as the deep-fried pickle or the knish. It's a nifty conceit, but also in some respects a fraught one, since anything this Borough can do, someone in a real borough can probably do better. It's not so much an all-star team as it is a fantasy-league squad.

Still, you root for the place, out of both civic patronage and civic pride. The sight, by the entrance, of a deli counter stocked with various delicacies (Di Palo's ricotta, De Lillo's biscotti, olives from the Pickle Guys) and then, ringing the dining room, of shelves arrayed with canned and jarred exotica (fish balls, mushroom ketchup, pickled thyme) bolsters that allegiance. (All these condiments are for sale.) But there's something about the space that feels distinctly un-New Yorky. Despite all the reclaimed wood and the vintage fixtures, the atmosphere, as well as the service, brings to mind that of a brewpub in a renovated warehouse in a not-quite-reviving industrial town. The dimensions of the room gobble up its thematic aspirations and may account for why the restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow's previous attempts in this space (Rocco's and Caviar & Banana) failed. If Borough can make it here, it can make it anywhere.

The menu is as uneven as it is wide-ranging. The Shan Dong dumplings, from Allen Street, have an authentic tang. The *guanciale*-and-ricotta flatbread is a delicious appetite-spoiler, as are the pork sliders—miniature pork-shoulder burgers, accompanied by a tasty pickled Macedonian pepper. A seared hunk of striped bass, with clams and chorizo, delicately invokes the waters separating the boroughs, and a mound of onion rings not-so-delicately summons thoughts of people travelling under and over those waters. Of special note are the macaroni-and-cheese pancake, a desiccated discus that is a tribute (and a fitting one) to Shopsin's, and the duck salad, which a diner recently described as "rank." Maybe all it needs is a dash of mushroom ketchup. (Open Mondays through Fridays for lunch and dinner, Saturdays for dinner, and Sundays for brunch and dinner. Entrées $12-$28.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*



The siege of Mecca lasted for two weeks.

The consequences are with us today.

The first operation of global jihad in modern times barely made the papers—why? *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Yaroslav Trofimov's page-turning narrative reveals for the first time...

- **How close the Saudi kingdom came to being toppled**
- **How the attack unleashed the forces of worldwide terror**
- **The troubling ineptness of the American response**

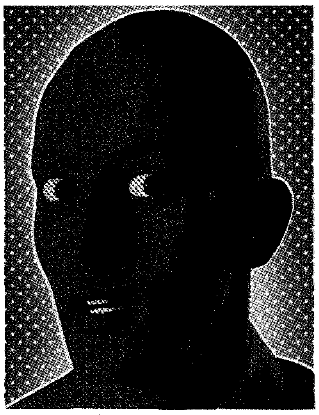
"Spellbinding... Illuminates a little-known hostage crisis...that helped give rise to Al Qaeda."
—Rajiv Chandrasekaran, author of *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*

Doubleday Available wherever books are sold

www.SiegeofMecca.com

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BODY SHOP

The Brooklyn-based composer-vocalist Corey Dargel is a baroquely unclassifiable artist whose songs fall between classical art song and indie pop. Gaunt in appearance and impish in spirit, he sings in a plaintive, innocent-sounding voice, his texts zigzagging between raw confession and cerebral absurdity. At HERE Arts Center, Dargel recently presented an hour-long theatre piece entitled "Removable Parts," in which he and the pianist Kathleen Supové assume the personas of people who wish to receive amputations. There are, apparently, such people, although in this case self-mutilation serves mainly as a metaphor for the less desperate measures human souls may resort to as they confront psychic pain. The result is at once uproarious and harrowing; one moment Dargel is prancing gawkily about in a style that might be called Weimar Village People, the next he is curled up in self-inflicted agony. Lest the mood turn too sombre, Supové registers her impatience by periodically feeding her music into a paper shredder.



SEAN McCABE

—Alex Ross

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Brushed with Light: American Landscape Watercolors from the Collection."** Through Jan. 27, 2008. ♦ **"Global Feminisms Remix."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Piranesi as Designer."** Through Jan. 20, 2008. ♦ **"Provoking Magic: Lighting of Ingo Maurer."** Through Jan. 20, 2008. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 to 5, Fridays, 10 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, noon to 6.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"This Is War! Robert Capa at Work."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ **"Gerda Taro."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. ♦ **"Other Weapons: Photography and Print Culture During the Spanish Civil War."** Through Jan. 6, 2008. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Camille Pissarro: Impressions of City and Country."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. ♦ **"Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Lower East Side: Photographs by Bruce Davidson."** Through Feb. 3, 2008. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"Painted with Words: Vincent Van Gogh's Letters to Émile Bernard."** Opens Sept. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

SCULPTURE CENTER
44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—**"Jeppe Hein: Illusion."** Minimalism goes mobile in the centerpiece of the Danish artist's show—two fourteen-foot-long mirrors suspended from the ceiling that rotate slowly like propellers winding up or down. "360° Illusion," which inevitably conjures the mirrored architectural interventions of Dan Graham, is a provocative mix of formalism and psychoanalysis (think Lacan's "mirror stage"). Intermittently confronted with their own reflections, viewers may find their meditation on light and form giving way to neurotic introspection: Is my posture that bad? Is my head that big? Is there something wrong with these mirrors? Stand there long enough and you will either make peace with Hein's monumental whirligig or drive yourself crazy. Through Nov. 25. ♦ **"Scott Lyall: The Little Contemporaries."** Through Nov. 25. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

TRACEY ROSE
Prints and a video by the South African artist offer a riposte to "Global Feminisms," last season's survey of art by women at the Brooklyn Museum. True, the show was aesthetically inert, and mainstream feminists would do well to keep their habits of tokenism in check. But Rose's attempt at blistering critique falls short. A videotaped reënactment of her performance on a panel at the museum—pink and blue sock puppets ask where "the coloreds" are—is pretty dull. The same can't be said about a large photograph that takes a funny, nasty swipe at Cool Britannia boosterism (the artist flashes her naughty bits while wearing a Union Jack miniskirt), but it belongs in a different show. Through Sept. 29. (The Project, 37 W. 57th St. 212-688-4673.)

Short List

HUMA BHABHA: Salon 94, at 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212. Through Oct. 26. **LAURIE SIMMONS:** Skarstedt, 20 E. 79th St. 212-737-2060. Through Oct. 27. **WILLIAM HENRY FOX TALBOT:** Krauss, 962 Park Ave., at 82nd St. 212-794-2064. Opens Sept. 27. **H. C. WESTERMANN:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through Nov. 3. **"THE WRITER'S BRUSH":** Shapolsky, 152 E. 65th St. 212-452-1094. Through Oct. 27.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

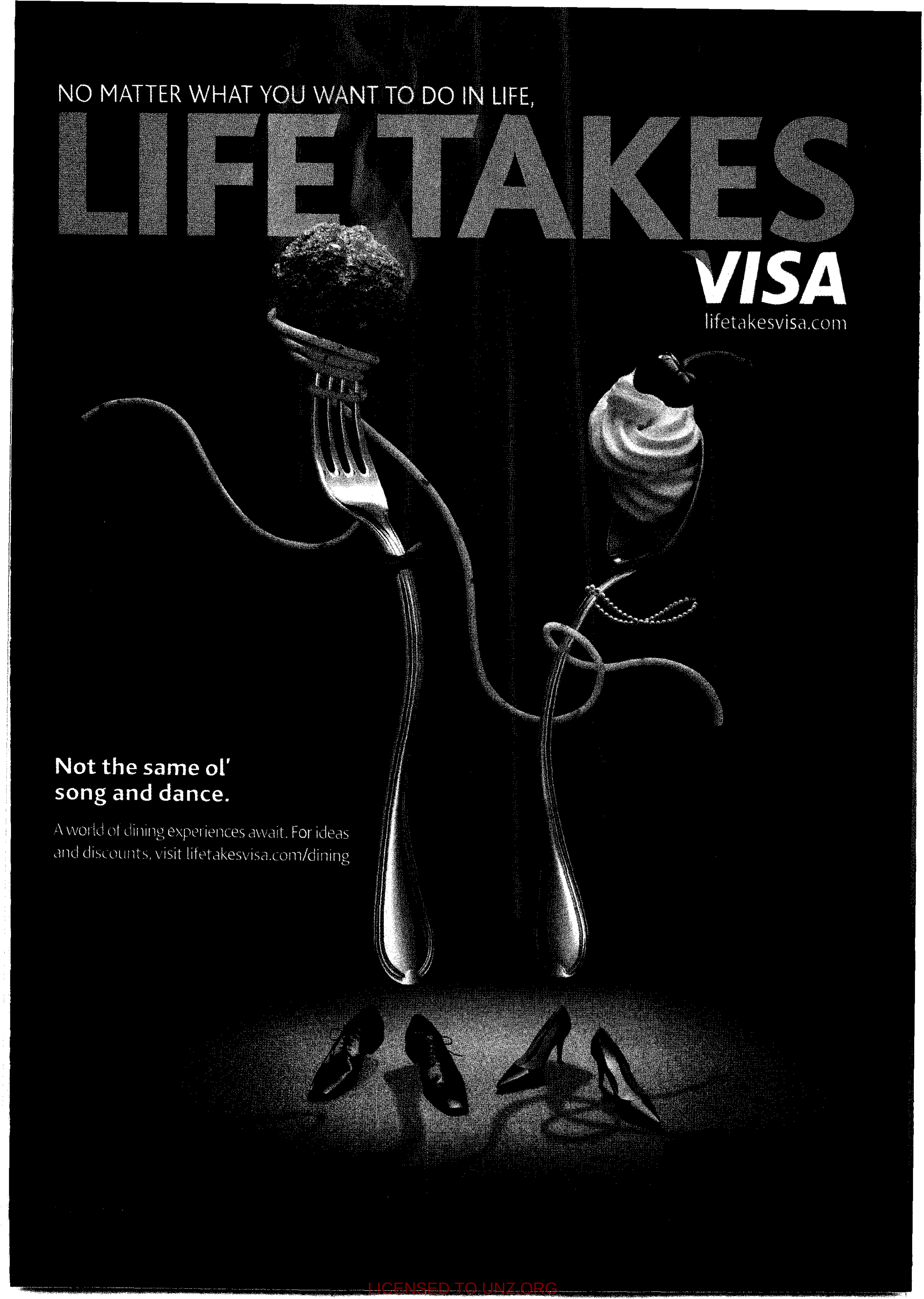
LARRY CLARK
Like so much of Clark's recent photography, his latest work is obsessive, relentless, and baffling. The gallery is filled with huge color snapshots of Jonathan Velasquez, the teen-age star of Clark's last film, "Wassup Rockers." Adolescence has always fascinated Clark, and he turns Velasquez into a pinup—his own River Phoenix—and fetish object, zeroing in on his faint moustache, full lips, and gangly body. A number of the pictures recall Clark's earlier, darker shots of Times Square hustlers, and Velasquez vamps for the camera like a pro. But he's also a spunky innocent, a Latino Dennis the Menace mooning the adult world. No wonder Clark has a crush on him. But does he really expect us to share it? Through Oct. 13. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

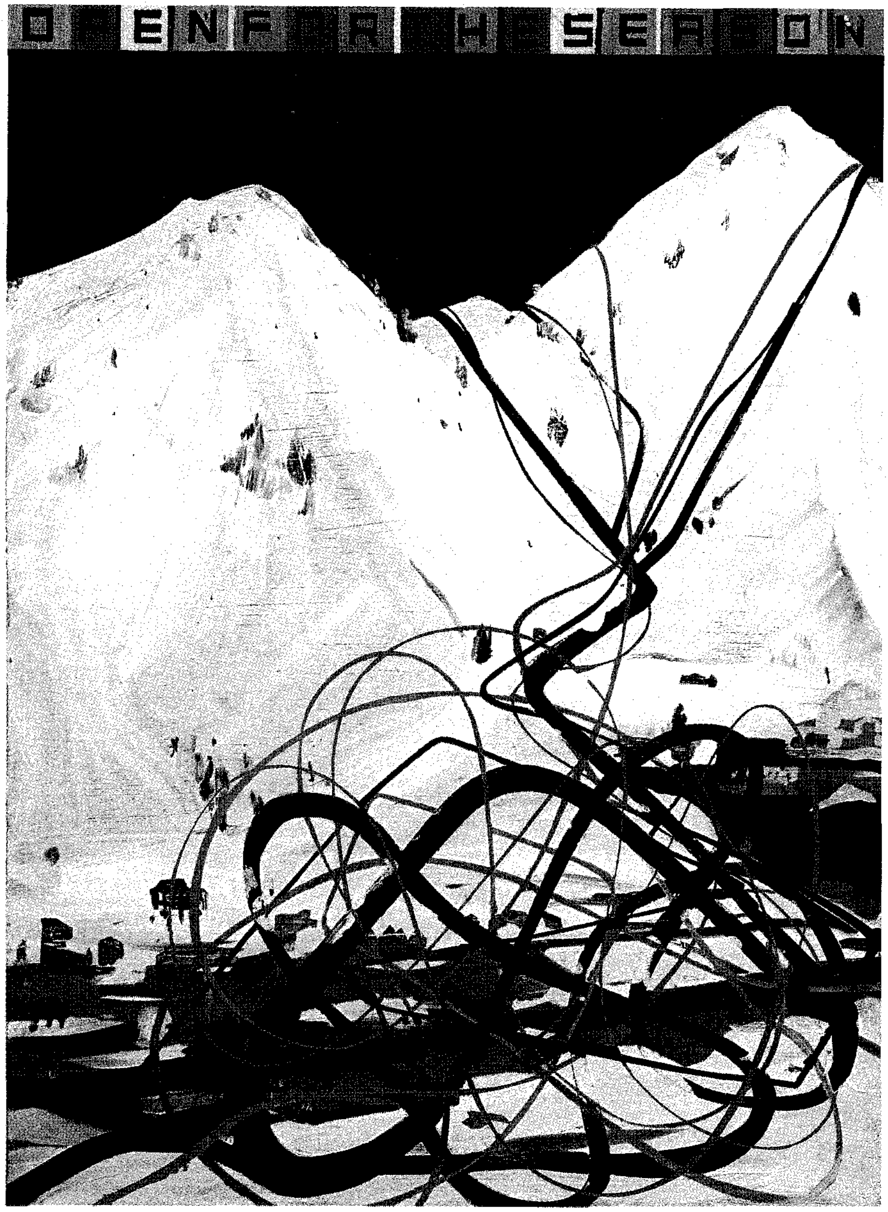
JIM DRAIN
Depending on your perspective, Drain has either sold out or grown into a bona-fide sculptor. In this show, he graduates from making punky alterna-knit blobs to crafting works with wavy appendages that extend his psychedelic vocabulary into an area that the gallery calls "cross-dressed formalism." The juxtaposition of wild, clashing textile patterns is still central, as it has been since his early days with the Forcefield collective. In addition to the knit works, items from Iggy Pop's wardrobe inspire a room of collages, while a brilliantly down-market take on minimalism occurs in the form of a sculptural bench: the tops of toilet tanks line up to create a spectrum of soothing industrial hues. Through Oct. 13. (Greene Naftali, 508 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770.)

NATALIE FRANK
Frank is plainly in love with painting. At just twenty-seven (she graduated from Columbia's M.F.A. program in 2006), she's tearing through the history of the medium, digesting and recasting everything in her path. The two largest works here are cluttered allegories that suggest a hybrid of Neo Rauch and Eric Fischl; elsewhere, passages of flesh recall Lucien Freud. Let your eye rest on a painting of a doe-eyed odalisque reclining on a sofa, a slightly tattered Venus with a weary gaze; behind her stands a nude couple, the woman's eyes widening as the man's hand wraps around her throat. It's not clear where Frank is going with all this, but she's getting there fast. Through Oct. 13. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 534 W. 26th St. 212-744-7400.)

DANA FRANKFORT / ABBEY WILLIAMS
Two young artists work out the kinks of bad-ass female subjectivity—or at least that's the idea. Frankfort's canvases cross color-field painterliness with graffiti scrawl. Each image contains a word—"Bananas," "Crack"—presumably so that the luscious surfaces are made brainy by the language, and vice versa. A more complicated take on brash semiotics emerges in Williams's pair of videos. Old mummy films are digitally dissected and collaged with other footage, yielding a waking dream about a demon lover (who might be culture incarnate); in a second piece, the artist superimposes an image of herself bound in rope onto a bust of a slave, to eerie effect. Through Oct. 6. (Bellwether, 134 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-929-5959.)

DEBORAH KASS
Kass is a voracious sampler. Instead of trying to cloak her interests in the foggy mantle of "influence," she comes right out and says (in a catalogue interview with John Waters), "I'm trying to feel as entitled as I can to every vocabulary I know and love. Musical, visual, and emotional."


NO MATTER WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN LIFE,
LIFE TAKES
VISA
lifetakesvisa.com
Not the same ol' song and dance.
A world of dining experiences await. For ideas and discounts, visit lifetakesvisa.com/dining



A painting from Jules de Balincourt's show "Unknowing Man's Nature," at Feuer.

A bursting Op art-inspired painting is stencilled with the come-on “Do You Wanna Funk with Me.” A gray gouache on paper that looks like a Jasper Johns repeats the word “Cojones.” A piece with hovering, Ed Ruscha-style lettering spells out what every painter is thinking: “Oh God I Need This Show.” But wait—it's a lyric from “A Chorus Line.” Through Oct. 13. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 212-563-4474.)

LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY
The influential Bauhaus guru was never one to be tied down to a particular discipline or style, and his experimental photographic work is among his slipperiest. In a compact show of just seven color photographs and two small-scale sculptures, all created between 1921 and 1946, Moholy-Nagy casts a spell with simple materials in odd forms. Still-life arrangements and sculptures, many so casual that they appear either accidental or found, are the apparent subject of the photographs. But constructions of wood discs, thick ribbons of Lucite, rope, pins, or colored gels are only jumping off points for skewed compositions of shadow and light that hover between the surreal and the sublime. Through Oct. 13. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000.)

RYAN TRECARTIN
The thought of sitting through an hour-and-forty-minute video could fill any gallery-goer with dread, but Trecartin's “I-Be Area” is worth the investment. It's a plummet down a cyberspace rabbit hole, filled with campy characters—club kid meets vaudeville—sporting cheerfully grotesque makeup, and discussing cloning, adoption, and replication. It all makes sense, when considered through the filter of media culture, where MySpace hopefuls dream of superstardom (“I can't live without an audience,” a character quips). You keep waiting for Trecartin to slip and for the video to lose steam. To his credit, it never does. Through Oct. 13. (Dee, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545.)

T. J. WILCOX
There's always been a touch of the fairy tale in Wilcox's scratchy 16mm. projections, which he cobbles together from found footage, still photographs, and digital film that he shoots himself. His third show at the gallery tells three stories of princesses who struggled with fame—who were buffeted by public opinion (Jackie Onassis), victimized by politics (Sissi, a nineteenth-century empress of Austria), or desperate for the spotlight (Jerry Hall, looking her most feral). A fourth film describes a childhood memory of a trip to a fair, where the young Wilcox entangled himself in a parachute and was rescued by an Indian chief. As ever, the work is woozy with nostalgia and romance, but its narrative pleasures are sharp. Through Oct. 13. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100.)

"SILVERSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY ANNUAL"
The gallery launches a yearly survey of new work, with ten curators (most of whom are museum professionals) choosing ten artists (most of whom have been working under the radar). The results are predictably uneven but encouragingly strong. Though several participants give their work a conceptual spin, nearly all of them are realists, making pictures of people, landscapes, and details of the natural world. For the best of them—Noelle Tan, Michael Lundgren, Barret Oliver, Sonja Thomsen—traditionalism is a springboard to something more personal. Look for Will Michels, whose images of an Iwo Jima reënactment in Texas undermine the premise of realism with an even more photogenic version of events. Through Oct. 13. (535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930.)

Short List

JULES DE BALINCOURT: Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700. Through Oct. 13. **WILLEM DE KOONING:** Gagosian, 522 W. 21st St. 212-741-1717. Through Oct. 27. **JAMIE ISENSTEIN:** Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through Oct. 20. **ARLENE SHECHET:** Harris, 529 W. 20th St. 212-463-9666. Through Oct. 6.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

KARL HAENDEL
Haendel's exhibition of drawings is titled “I Need Work,” a tongue-in-cheek cri de coeur that conflates self-employment and self-improvement. Velvety pencil-and-charcoal portraits, hung salon-style, depict everything from political convention-goers wearing toothy masks of Jimmy Carter, Ted Kennedy, and Richard Nixon to precisely rendered boxes of Tide and Cheer. There are also dense word-drawings; one poses tough questions to a paterfamilias (“How did you get out of going to Vietnam?” “Did you ever cheat on mom?”). The tide is rising; the cheer hollow. All is droll and smart. Through Oct. 13. (Harris Lieberman, 89 Vandam St. 212-206-1290.)

Short List

HUMA BHABHA: Salon 94, at 1 Freeman Alley. 646-672-9212. Through Oct. 26. **MIKE NELSON:** Creative Time, 117 Delancey St. 212-206-6674. Through Nov. 1. **GEORGINA STARR:** Williams, 313 W. 4th St. 212-229-2757. Through Oct. 27. **"THE GEOMETRY OF HOPE":** Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-6789. Through Dec. 8.

DANCE

BIG DANCE THEATRE
“The Other Here” successfully melds two Chekhovian stories by the Japanese novelist Masuji Ibuse, scenes taken from a conference of American life-insurance salesmen, sped-up traditional dances from Okinawa, and a handful of that archipelago's infectious pop songs. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Sept. 25-29 at 7:30.)

"REVOLUTION"
The Irish-step-dancing champion Joel Hanna teams up with Michael Schulster, the scruffy all-American alum of “Tap Dogs,” to create a new rock-and-roll show with a live garage band. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Sept. 25-26 and Oct. 2 at 7:30, Sept. 27-28 at 8, Sept. 29 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 30 at 2 and 7:30. Through Oct. 7.)

"FALL FOR DANCE"
The first week of City Center's festival—this year presenting twenty-eight companies—opens with a program that includes the Paul Taylor classic “Arden Court,” Alexei Ratmansky's striking “Middle Duet,” performed by Kirov dancers,

NO MATTER WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN LIFE,

LIFE TAKES®

VISA

lifetakesvisa.com

Pre-packaged travel plans make it easy to pick up and go.

For ideas and discounts on travel, visit lifetakesvisa.com/travel

and Twyla Tharp's ballet "Deuce Coupe," set to the Beach Boys and danced by Juilliard students (Sept. 26-27). The second program includes the flamboyant Act II pas de deux from "Le Corsaire," performed by American Ballet Theatre's thrilling Herman Cornejo, and "Lux," a propulsive piece by Doug Varone (Sept. 28). In the third program (Sept. 29-30), the Royal Ballet star Johan Kobborg performs "Afternoon of a Faun," by Tim Rushton, and the Swede Mats Ek dances his own work, "Memory," with his wife, Ana Laguna. For a full schedule, visit www.citycenter.org. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Sept. 26-29 at 8 and Sept. 30 at 3. Through Oct. 6.)

TERE O'CONNOR DANCE

Though the title of O'Connor's new piece, "Rammed Earth," refers to a building technique involving shifting layers of dirt, and the dance itself requires viewers to move around and shift perspective, the most intriguing shifts in the work are tonal. Created in collaboration with a cast of unfailingly interesting dancers (Heather Olson, Matthew Rogers, Hilary Clark, and Christopher Williams), the piece veers from dry experiment into droll satire and back, blurring the distinction between the two. Such is the ambiguity that among the recent dances that "Rammed Earth" seems to send up is "Rammed Earth." Co-presented by Danspace Project. (The Chocolate Factory, 5-49 49th Ave., Long Island City. 212-352-3101. Sept. 26-29 at 7 and 9 and Sept. 30 at 5 and 7. Through Oct. 7.)

"NEW BALLET"

In their third collaboration, Columbia University's Miller Theatre and the organizers of "Works & Process," at the Guggenheim, have commissioned three new ballets from three vastly different choreographers: Amanda Miller, a former William Forsythe dancer and the founder of the German ensemble Pretty Ugly Dance Company; Luca Veggetti, an Italian with a penchant for stark, sleek imagery; and Alison Chase, the former artistic director of Pilobolus. All three pieces are set to contemporary music (John Adams's "Alleged Dances," a quartet by the British guitar innovator Fred Frith, the electronically enhanced cello sounds of Paolo Aralla), which will be played live by the Sirius String Quartet and the guitarist Nick Didkovsky. New York City Ballet dancers will be joined by performers from other New York companies, including Stephen Petronio and Armitage Gone! (Miller Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Sept. 27 at 7, Sept. 28-29 at 8, and Sept. 30 at 3.)

DANKMEYER DANCE COMPANY

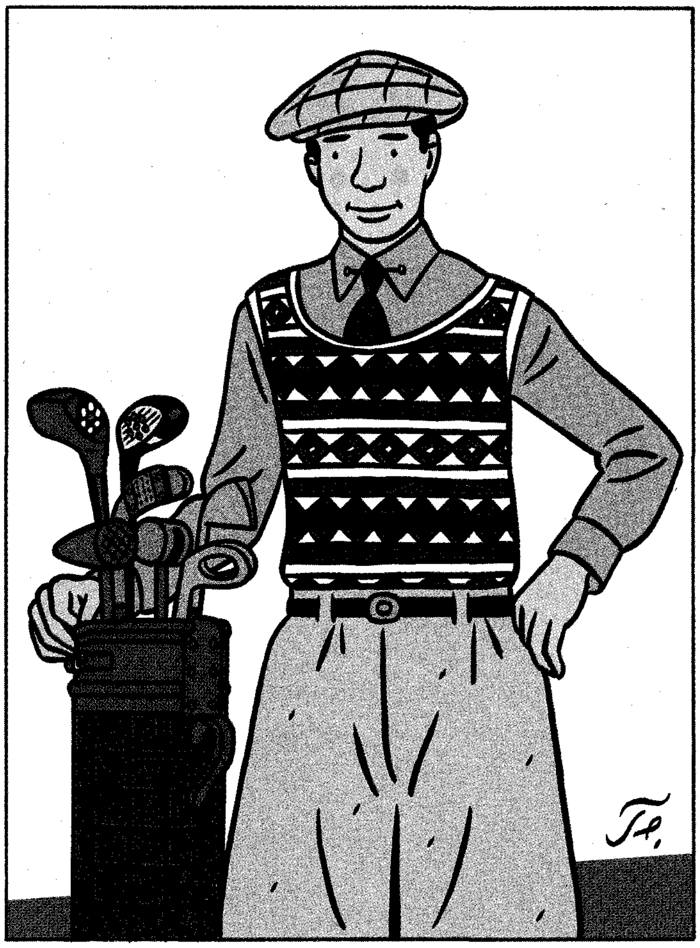
Erica Dankmeyer is a graduate of the Martha Graham school and company, as are many of her dancers, and the Graham influence is evident in technique, strength, and dramatic intensity. Dankmeyer's "The Thought Behind/Still the Line" responds to knotty Ligeti piano études with a fractured collection of interesting movement ideas. Andrea Haenggi, who met Dankmeyer at the Graham school fifteen years ago and whose career has moved in a very different, video-installation direction, also contributes a solo portrait of Dankmeyer. The evening's music—on piano, cello, and electric guitar—is played live. (St. Marks In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Sept. 27-29 at 8:30.)

"FRIDAYS AT NOON"

The 92nd Street Y's free, informal concert-and-conversation series starts up again. Two duets—Paul Matteson and Jennifer Nugent (with choreographic help from Terry Creach) and Erin Reck and Jeffrey Kurtze—limn relationships in couple form. The former Stephen Petronio dancer Ashleigh Leite constricts six women in a piece called "Crawl Space." And Daniel Linehan presents an excerpt from a work-in-progress solo, "Not About Everything." (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Sept. 28 at noon.)

NEW YORK BAROQUE DANCE COMPANY

At the Mark Morris Dance Center, the ensemble presents an innovative program made up of five new works, each of which reimagines Baroque forms in different ways, from the application of structured improvisation to the use of post-minimalist music. (3 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 800-494-8497. Sept. 28-29 at 7:30.)



Sotheby's offers a sale of antique golf clubs on Sept. 27-28.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

Peter Gelb's "new Met" provides glamour and novelty in equal measure. This year's opening night belongs to a new production, by Mary Zimmerman, of **"Lucia di Lammermoor,"** which brings a glittering cast—including Natalie Dessay, Marcello Giordani, Mariusz Kwiecien, and John Relyea—under the experienced direction of James Levine. (Sept. 27 and Oct. 1 at 8.) ♦ Sonja Frisell's grand, conservative production of **"Aida"** is so overpowering—even the dancing's good—that it can easily survive the fluctuating casts which the Met rotates through it. This one boasts some notable singers, however, including Angela M. Brown, Dolora Zajick, Marco Berti, and Andrzej Dobber; Kazushi Ono, in his début, conducts. (Sept. 29 at 1:30.) ♦ Gounod's **"Roméo et Juliette"** offers the dazzling Anna Netrebko and the elegant Roberto Alagna singing the title roles, with Stéphane Degout as Mercutio; Plácido Domingo. (Sept. 29 at 8.) ♦ One of the more enduring of Jonathan Miller's Met productions has been of **"Le Nozze di Figaro,"** providing a clean background for Mozart's characters to plot their timeless stratagems. The latest cast, headed by Hei-Kyung Hong as Countess Almaviva, includes such charismatic young singers as Isabel Bayrakdarian and Erwin Schrott (in the roles of Susanna and Figaro); Philippe Jordan, a fine young Mozartean, conducts. (Oct. 2 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

With **"Margaret Garner,"** Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison have created something not seen since the Gershwin brothers penned "Porgy and Bess"—a first-class opera that can draw both black and white audiences. Danielpour's invention may not quite reach that work's lofty heights, but it is more than adequate to support the magnificent poetry of Morrison's libretto (a moving tale of a runaway slave who would rather kill her children than have them return to live in bondage), and features more than one show-stopping aria. With excellent performances from Tracie Luck, Lisa Daltirus, Gregg Baker, and Timothy Mix; George Manahan conducts a well-rehearsed orchestra. (Sept. 26 at 7:30 and Sept. 29 at 8. These are the final performances.) ♦ A genuinely capable young cast, under the inspired direction of David Grabarkewitz (*adapting James Robinson's production*), makes City Opera's **"La Bohème"** lively and beautiful; the First World War setting, hinting at the collapse of Romantic idealism, adds a welcome bit of irony. With Inna Dukach, Elizabeth Caballero, Dinyar Vania, and Brian Mulligan; Ari Pelto leads a brisk account of the score. (Sept. 27 at 8 and Sept. 29 at 1:30.) ♦ A new production by Stephen Lawless, borrowed from the Dallas Opera, of the great verismo double bill of Mascagni's **"Cavalleria Rusticana"** and Leoncavallo's **"Pagliacci,"** with a cast featuring Anna Maria Chiuri and Brandon Jovanovich in the first opera and Maria Kanyova, Carl Tanner, and Andrew Oakden in the second; Manahan. (Sept. 28 at 8.) ♦ The durable Harold Prince production of **"Don Giovanni,"** restaged by Albert Sherman, with Aaron St. Clair Nicholson (in the title role), Mardi Byers, Julianna Di Giacomo, Bruce Sledge, and Daniel Mobbs; David Wroe. (Sept. 30 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

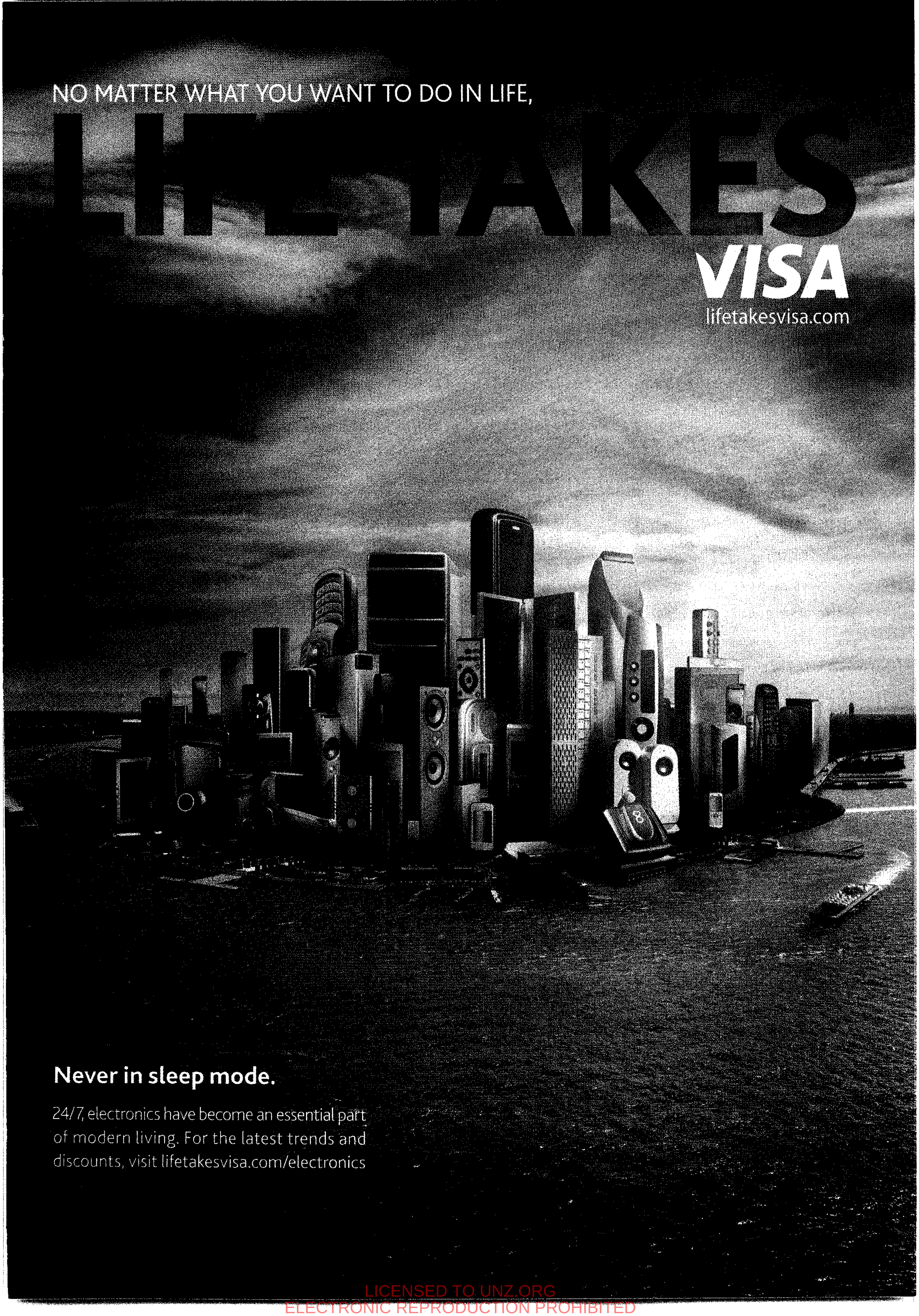
GOTHAM CHAMBER OPERA

Neal Goren's company, which since 2000 has been offering high-quality performances of intimate operas from the far corners of the repertory, has a new space this season (the Skirball Center) and a new focus on combining music and dance. The season begins with a production of Astor Piazzolla's tango opera, **"María de Buenos Aires,"** directed and choreographed by David Parsons. (New York University, Washington Sq. S. 212-279-4200. Sept. 26 at 7:30 and Sept. 28-29 at 8.)

AMATO OPERA

It has been sixty years since Tony Amato and his late wife, Sally, founded their diminutive opera company in the East Village, and in tribute the company kicks off the new season with a production of the opera that the Amatos began with: **"The Barber of Seville."** Supertitles have finally arrived at the Amato Opera Theatre, but they probably won't dilute the compa-

FLOCH

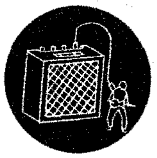

NO MATTER WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN LIFE,
LIFE TAKES
VISA
lifetakesvisa.com

Never in sleep mode.

24/7, electronics have become an essential part of modern living. For the latest trends and discounts, visit lifetakesvisa.com/electronics

ny's Italian hill-town-style charm, conjured up by a mix of professional and amateur performers; Amato himself still provides the musical and stage direction. (319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. Sept. 29 at 2 and 7:30 and Sept. 30 at 2:30. Through Oct. 14.)

POP NOTES
AMERICAN SOUNDS



"Magic" (Columbia), Bruce Springsteen's new studio album, kicks off with the brooding, propulsive "Radio Nowhere." "I just want to hear some rhythm," Springsteen sings, railing like a lay preacher against the blandness of contemporary music. If the song came at the end of the album, it might sound like an apology; "Magic" feels inert and calculated, full of stormy guitar, gelatinous keyboards, and melodramatic strings. The production seems to be hiding something—perhaps it's the album's generic heart. Springsteen's best albums have always had a thesis: youth is invincibility, the American dream is hollow, divorce can crush you. "Magic" is simply a collection of songs. Some are strong, particularly the lovely "Girls in Their Summer Clothes" and the spooky, minimalist title track. But with neither a center nor eccentricities, the balance of the album just sounds like Springsteen playing Springsteen.

After Creedence Clearwater Revival disbanded, in the early seventies, John Fogerty went to war with his label, Fantasy Records, and the fog of that war obscured Fogerty's connection to his own musical legacy. Over the past few years, Fogerty and Fantasy have come to terms, and **"Revival"** (Fantasy) is positioned as a full-fledged return. "Don't You Wish It Was True," which opens the album, could have been written in 1970, and "Creedence Song" both comments on and replicates the pleasures of classic rock. The album flirts with nostalgia, in part because Fogerty sounds eerily unchanged, but it has plenty to say about the present, most notably in a pair of songs aimed directly at the Bush Administration: the ominous "Long Dark Night" and the short punk blast "I Can't Take It No More."

As an artist and an activist, Steve Earle seemed to reach an impasse of sorts with his last record, "The Revolution Starts . . . Now," in 2004. **"Washington Square Serenade"** (New West) returns him to the crossroads of the political and personal with a song cycle about his move to New York City and his recent marriage to the country singer Allison Moorer. The album opens with the evocative "Tennessee Blues," about Earle's relocation, and "City of Immigrants," with the New York band Forro in the Dark, is sprightly and smart, like a country version of "Graceland." On balance, the political content is more nuanced and powerful than the last time out—"Jericho Road" is superb, mysterious and universal like the best blues music—but the album's strongest moments are the love songs Earle sings for (and, in one case, with) Moorer: "Sparkle and Shine" and "Days Aren't Long Enough."

—*Ben Greenman*

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Lorin Maazel and his orchestra are concentrating on Tchaikovsky in the first few weeks of the season, with fresh young virtuosos as an extra draw. Their latest concert sequence features the Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-Flat Minor (with Simon Trpčeski) and the First Symphony ("Winter Dreams"). (Sept. 26-27 at 7:30.) ♦ In two further concerts, Trpčeski and his concerto return, followed by performances of the "Manfred" Symphony, an extravagant tone poem inspired by Byron. (Sept. 28 at 2 and Sept. 29 at 8.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.) ♦ **Note:** Trpčeski will join the Philharmonic's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow, and its principal hornist, Philip Meyers, in a concert at the Metropolitan Museum that includes Brahms's Horn Trio and a selection of solo piano works by Chopin. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Sept. 30 at 8.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) was a lesbian, a suffragette, and a master musician who was one of the first modern women to enjoy a full-fledged professional career as a composer. Her opera **"The Wreckers"**—which, stylistically, seems to lie somewhere between Wagner and Vaughan Williams—was premiered in Leipzig in 1906 and taken up soon afterward by the conductor Thomas Beecham. Now Leon Botstein takes his turn, leading a concert performance of the work with a cast that features, among others, the Met baritone Louis Otey. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Sept. 30 at 3.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES: POMERIUM

The second annual New York Early Music Celebration will be distinguished by an appearance by Alexander Blachly's renowned chamber choir, which launches the season at Corpus Christi Church with "Battling the Serpent," a concert of contrapuntal works from the Flemish Renaissance. (529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Sept. 30 at 4.)

RECITALS

KALICHSTEIN-LAREDO-ROBINSON TRIO

Under the leadership of Hanna Arie-Gaifman, the music programming at the 92nd Street Y is beginning to emerge from many years of slumber. Its season begins with one of the country's most eminent chamber ensembles, who will offer the complete piano trios of Beethoven in one day. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Sept. 30 at 12, 4, and 8. For details, see www.92Y.org.)

MARC PELOQUIN

The pianist lends his subtle, polished style to works by Schumann, Copland, and David Del Tredici (a première). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 1 at 7:30.)

"CROSSING THE LINE" FESTIVAL: "NOUVELLES VAGUES"

The French Institute-Alliance Française's fall festival, rich with offerings in all of the performing arts, features this curious concert, in which the Traffic Quintet (the film composer Alexandre Desplat serves as music director) performs scores from fifteen classic films of the French New Wave, radically condensed from their original contexts. With new video by Ange Leccia. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-307-4100. Oct. 2 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

"LECTURE ON THE WEATHER"

In cöordination with Merce Cunningham's residency at Bard College, the dancer's great musical and personal partner, the late John Cage, is honored with a performance of his collaborative, mixed-media stage work from 1975, based on texts by Thoreau; the work's narrators will include such luminaries as Cunningham, the poet John Ashbery, and the performance artist John Kelly, accompanied by Bard musicians. A Cage "tribute concert" featuring John King, Stephan Moore, and the percussion group Nexus will be held on the previous evening. (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900. Sept. 27-28 at 8.)

TANNERY POND CONCERTS

Those wishing to imbibe the chamber music of summer one last time should head up to Christian Steiner's little festival, held in an acoustically superb old Shaker tannery. For the finale, the violinist Kurt Nikkanen, the cellist Daniel Gaisford, and the pianist Maria Asteriadou join Steiner—renowned as a photographer, but also a pianist—in performances of the Handel-Halvorsen "Chaconne" and the Kodály Duo, Op. 7 (both for violin and cello), Debussy's Cello Sonata, and Ravel's Piano Trio. (New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-9441. Sept. 29 at 8.)

MOVIES
OPENING

THE DARJEELING LIMITED

Wes Anderson directed this comedy, about three brothers who seek to bond on a train trip through India. Starring Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, and Jason Schwartzman. Opening Sept. 29. (Lincoln Square and Union Square.)

FEAST OF LOVE

In this romantic drama, directed by Robert Benton, two friends, a professor (Morgan Freeman) and a coffee-bar owner (Greg Kinnear), experience love and heartbreak. Co-starring Alexa Davalos. Opening Sept. 28. (In wide release.)

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION

A comedy about a college student (Sam Huntington) who pretends to be gay in order to befriend a woman he loves. Directed by Ryan Shiraki. Opening Sept. 28. (Quad Cinema.)

THE GAME PLAN

The Rock plays a swinging quarterback who learns that he is the father of a seven-year-old girl. Co-starring Kyra Sedgwick; directed by Andy Fickman. Opening Sept. 28. (In wide release.)

THE KINGDOM

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 28. (In wide release.)

LUST, CAUTION

Ang Lee directed this Second World War drama, set in China, about a female spy's illicit affair with a collaborator. Starring Tang Wei and Tony Leung. In Mandarin. Opening Sept. 28. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

OUTSOURCED

In this comedy, directed by John Jeffcoat, an American salesman travels to India to train his replacement. Opening Sept. 28. (Quad Cinema.)

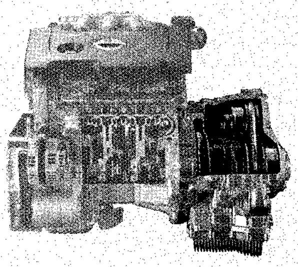
TRADE

Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Sept. 28. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

Julie Taymor, who staged "The Lion King" and directed a hallucinogenic film version of "Titus Andronicus," lavishes all her visual genius on this overscaled production, which connects almost three dozen Beatles songs with the thinnest thread of a story. Set in the mid-sixties, the film is about an English boy from Liverpool (Jim Sturgess) who moves to Greenwich Village and meets a beautiful, soon-to-be radicalized girl (Evan Rachel Wood); together with her Vietnam-bound brother, they embark on the trippy adventures of the era. The film is populated with characters named Jude, Lucy, JoJo, Prudence, and Sadie, and the Beatles songs have been reworked (by Elliot Goldenthal and T-Bone Bur-



The "Hot Rod" Murano's award-winning engine

Motor Trend Says We're #1.

(And who are we to argue?)

Actually, it's number one. It being the Nissan Murano. Because in *Motor Trend*'s March 2007 comparison of crossovers,* the Murano impressed testers with its comfortable interior, powerful all-wheel drive, high-quality Bose® audio system and high fuel economy. They dubbed it the "sports car of the group," awarding it first place. Still, the Murano remains humble. After all, with a ride this smooth, it's impossible to swagger. For more information, visit **NissanUSA.com**.

★★★★★
5-STAR RATING
FRONT- AND SIDE-IMPACT CRASH SAFETY

The Nissan Murano

NISSAN®

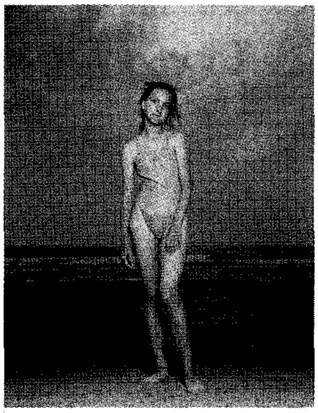
SHIFT_smoothUV

*The 2006 Nissan Murano won first place in *Motor Trend*'s March 2007 comparison test over the 2007 Ford Edge, 2007 Hyundai Santa Fe and the 2007 Toyota Highlander. 2007 EPA fuel-economy estimates for Murano 2WD w/CVT are 20 mpg city/25 mpg highway. Actual mileage may vary. Government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program (www.safercar.gov). A 5-star rating is the highest government safety rating for driver and right-front-passenger seating positions in frontal crash tests and for front- and rear-passenger seating positions in side-impact crash tests. Model tested was 2007 Murano with standard side-impact air bags. Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT_" tagline and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. Tread Lightly!® Please. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2007 Nissan North America, Inc.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE BIG PICTURE

The Metropolitan Museum has been a major player in the field of contemporary photography for years, but the massive scale of some of its most important acquisitions has kept them out of view—until now. The new Joyce and Robert Menschel Hall for Modern Photography, a long, sleek, high-ceilinged space across from the more classically proportioned galleries on the second floor, gives the museum a chance to flaunt its biggest pictures. The inaugural installation includes works that every museum and private collector is scrambling for: a Richard Prince cowboy, a Rineke Dijkstra bather, a Thomas Struth church interior, a Cindy Sherman "centerfold," a Wolfgang Tillmans still-life. But this is not just a collection of chic trophies. Photos by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Sigmar Polke ground the selection in the avant-garde and the conceptual. And Thomas Ruff's enormous, decomposing computer-screen image of the World Trade Center mid-collapse proves that even trophies can be explosive devices.

—*Vince Aletti*



RINEKE DIJKSTRA

nett) for the varying degrees of musical talent on display (Bono is fantastic; Eddie Izzard, less so). Because the screenplay is light on dialogue and most of the story is told through the songs, the film never really gets a thorough hold on any of its characters—it's cameo-friendly but emotionally neutered. Still, it's an audacious and creatively risky wonder, with enough visual pizzazz amid the insanity to capture the spirit of its turbulent times.—*Bruce Diones* (In limited release.)

THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES BY THE COWARD ROBERT FORD

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT

With this bitter, cynical, grimly funny film noir, from 1956, Fritz Lang ended his twenty-year American career. The suave, smug Dana Andrews stars as Tom Garrett, a swaggering journalist-turned-novelist in search of a sensational story for his next book. His former editor and future father-in-law (Sidney Blackmer), a fervent opponent of the death penalty, puts him up to a daring experiment. To prove the state capable of executing an innocent man, the two men plan to fabricate and plant evidence that is likely to get Tom convicted of a murder he didn't commit, and then to reveal the hoax and get him pardoned. Lang strips his already spare style of symbol and shadow to render this perverse tale with a cold, swift, logical perfection. Tom's clearly inadvisable ploy is concealed even from his fiancée (Joan Fontaine), who stands by him while the crusading D.A.'s case closes inexorably around him like a Venus flytrap. As she takes drastic steps to save him, the plot presses to its end with the macabre jauntiness of a quick, clipped march to the gallows.—*Richard Brody* (Moving Image; Sept. 30.)

THE BRAVE ONE

The director Neil Jordan's ambitious attempt to renew the urban-vigilante genre sags under an unsupported burden of imposed moral and political significance. Erica Bain (Jodie Foster), the on-air host of a daily radio paean to New York street life, slowly recovers from a brutal Central Park mugging that left her in a three-week coma and her fiancé dead. Frustrated by the law's methodical workings, she buys an illegal handgun. One night, confronted by a convenience-store gunman, she blows him away and discovers she likes it, then stalks the city in search of other evildoers. In depicting the pleasures of revenge, Jordan wants to expose its moral and psychological price. Indeed, he writes his message large, turning the story into a supercilious post-9/11 allegory: the crime took place on June 11th; a voice-over cites D. H. Lawrence's definition of the "essential American soul" as a "killer"; another character asks, "Hasn't the whole Iraqi debacle taught us anything?"; and a victim of collateral damage from Erica's shooting of a self-proclaimed suicide attacker asks, "Is this still America?" The script cuts its characters down to fit its message, and Jordan's bleary, cramped direction strips the flavor from his New York locations: it might as well be Omaha.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

EASTERN PROMISES

The new David Cronenberg film, set among Russian mobsters in London, stars Viggo Mortensen as Nikolai, a part-time chauffeur and full-time threat. He takes care of business for Semyon (Armin Mueller-Stahl), a soft-spoken restaurateur with frightening blue eyes, and Semyon's whining son (Vincent Cassel). Into this murk comes Anna (Naomi Watts), a midwife, who is trying to trace the family of an orphaned Russian child. What Cronenberg and his screenwriter, Steve Knight, want to engineer is a collision between worlds that have nothing—no social habits or moral norms—in common. The result, despite the modern setting, is a strangely old-fashioned fable, with a redeeming innocent thrown among evil men. There is no denying the momentum of the story, or Mortensen's shade-wearing composure, but some of the casting (Cassel especially) is askew, and the tone keeps lurching from the sombre into the ghastly as Cronenberg strives to maintain his reputation as a master bloodletter. You may need to look away. With the compelling, cadaverous Donald Sumpter (last seen in "The Constant Gardener") as an English cop.—*Anthony Lane* (9/17/07) (In wide release.)

IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOON

This feels like the right time to make a documentary about the Apollo space program. There is a new generation of filmgoers for whom it feels like ancient history, verging on the irrelevant; in which case they require immediate instruction. Moreover, the surviving astronauts are now in their seventies, and thus able to reflect on their achievements with an ease and a modesty that render them more approachable than their younger, superhuman selves. The director, David Sington, interviews most of them (apart from the reclusive Neil Armstrong), interspersing their contributions with original NASA footage and steering clear of dramatic reconstruction. Philip Sheppard's accompanying score is, as so often with tales of the extraterrestrial, more strident than is necessary; the feats of men like Michael Collins and Alan Bean (to name the two most affable souls on show) need no musical boost. Produced by Ron Howard.—*A.L.* (9/17/07) (Lincoln Square and Sunshine Cinema.)

IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH

The deadpan American hipster Tommy Lee Jones gives the performance of a lifetime in this sombre but fascinating movie, playing a former army man, Hank Deerfield, whose son, Mike (Jonathan Tucker), after serving in Iraq, has gone AWOL in America. When the boy's body turns up, burned and dismembered, near a base in New Mexico, Hank joins forces with a local police detective (Charlize Theron) to find out what happened. The picture, written and directed by Paul Haggis, is a detailed police procedural encasing a technological and metaphysical lunge at the truth. As Hank looks for Mike's killers, he also tries to interpret the fragmented war scenes that his son recorded on his camera phone. The emotional center is the bond between two generations of warriors—Hank's fear that his son has gone feral, and Mike's anguished attempt to communicate what has happened to him through pictures. The tone of the film is wounded and ambiguous; it's the very opposite of a tearjerker. With Susan Sarandon, as Hank's wife, and Jason Patric, as an army investigator. The muted cinematography is by Roger Deakins. Based on an actual case—the death of specialist Richard Davis, in 2003, as reported by Mark Boal in a *Playboy* article published in May 2004.—*David Denby* (9/24/07) (In limited release.)

THE IRON HORSE

John Ford's mammoth, rambunctious frontier romance sets the building of the transcontinental railway around the murder of a visionary surveyor by a white man posing as an Indian. The victim's son (George O'Brien) gets to avenge his father's death, win his sweetheart (Madge Bellamy), and save the railroad simultaneously. The picture is absurd—and enjoyable. Ford came up with so many spectacular or spirited bits of business, including appearances by the likes of Wild Bill Hickok (Jack Padjan) and Buffalo Bill Cody (George Waggner), that he created the celluloid equivalent of a Wild West show. Many of the hallmarks of Ford's later career appear here in vaudevillian form: the belief in manifest destiny, the love of the Irish (at the expense of shirking Italian co-workers), the idealization of Abraham Lincoln, and the balance of fear and respect for the Indians (the baddest bad guy is that white fellow in redface). Silent.—*Michael Sragow* (New York Film Festival; Oct. 1.)

THE ROMANCE OF ASTRÉE AND CÉLADON

If, as the eighty-seven-year-old Eric Rohmer has suggested, this is his last film, he's leaving the stage with an audacious flourish, infusing a fifth-

© 2007 KF Holdings.

NEW
Yuban
Organic
RICH MEDIUM ROAST
USDA ORGANIC
Yuban
Original
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT & SUPPORTING COFFEE FARMERS
Yuban
DARK ROAST
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT & SUPPORTING COFFEE FARMERS
CERTIFIED

The coffee you make can make a difference.

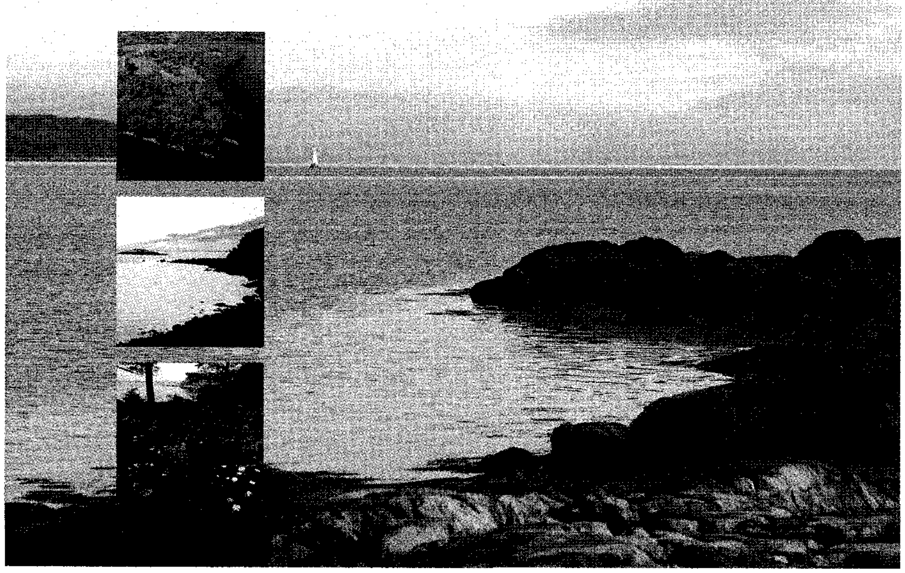
Introducing Yuban Organic, the latest in our line of sustainable coffees. And don't forget Yuban Original and Dark Roast coffee beans are Rainforest Alliance Certified,™ which supports the people and wildlife in coffee growing regions. So no matter what Yuban you choose to enjoy, you know you're making a difference.

USDA ORGANIC

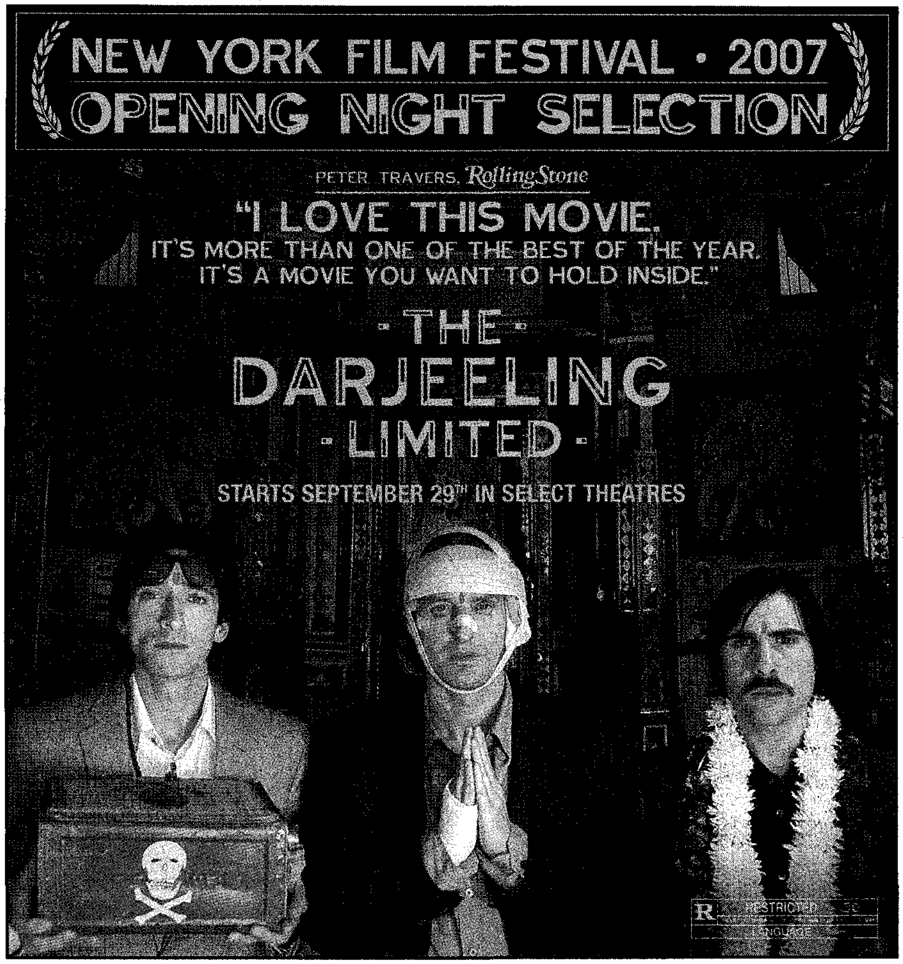
RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED EST 1987

www.yuban.com

AN EXCEPTIONAL PROPERTY ON THE MAINE COAST



BREWSTER POINT
Land Company
OCEAN FRONT HOME SITES TO BE AVAILABLE IN ROCKPORT, MAINE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE PROPERTIES
PLEASE CALL 207-594-0003 OR 1-888-522-0003
ALL LOT PURCHASE AGREEMENTS SHALL BE CONTINGENT UPON OBTAINING PENDING LOCAL AND STATE APPROVALS.


NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL • 2007
OPENING NIGHT SELECTION
PETER TRAVERS, RollingStone
"I LOVE THIS MOVIE.
IT'S MORE THAN ONE OF THE BEST OF THE YEAR.
IT'S A MOVIE YOU WANT TO HOLD INSIDE."
THE DARJEELING LIMITED
STARTS SEPTEMBER 29TH IN SELECT THEATRES
R RESTRICTED
LANGUAGE

century pastoral fantasy (adapted from a seventeenth-century novel) with a lifetime of themes, passions, and big ideas. The young shepherd and shepherdess of the title are driven apart through a misunderstanding. Céladon becomes jealous, Astrée breaks up with him, and Céladon tries to drown himself—only to be rescued by three noble nymphs from a nearby castle, one of whom, the mistress of the manor, falls for him. As usual, Rohmer shows the way to true love through the rejection of a false one; making his eighteenth-century moralist's view explicit, he sets the misadventures in images redolent of Watteau and Fragonard. The crucial moments are dialectical—a disputation between a faithful lover and a capering libertine, a druid's pagan proof of monotheism and the Trinity. As a result, it takes Rohmer a long time to reunite the original pair, but from love delayed, he asserts, music, painting, poetry, architecture, and religion are born. In French.—*R.B.* (New York Film Festival; Sept. 29-30.)

THE SILENCE BEFORE BACH
The Spanish director Pere Portabella's new film brings Bach's music to life with a mysterious, magnificent blend of drama, documentary, and quasi-surrealist whimsy. Beginning with a scene of a player piano rattling off the Goldberg Variations while rolling through a bright, bare loft, Portabella tickles the senses with a series of skits: a truck driver who plays Bach on the harmonica; Bach himself (the harpsichordist/organist Christian Brembeck) teaching his son Christoph Friedrich music via the "Well-Tempered Clavier"; a Bach impersonator hosting tourists in Leipzig; an orchestra of cellists playing a suite while speeding along in a sleek new subway car; a boat trip through Dresden, where the Goldberg Variations were commissioned, as a guide recounts the 1945 fire bombing; a bookseller who speaks to a customer of the horrific abuses of great music in Auschwitz; and Felix Mendelssohn (Daniel Ligorio) discovering the "St. Matthew Passion" on a piece of sheet music in which his butcher has wrapped meat. From puckish humor and borderline kitsch, a great and serious notion emerges: the construction of modern Europe on the basis of classical music, which, as a result, endures tenaciously there. In Spanish and German.—*R.B.* (MOMA; Sept. 26 and Sept. 29.)

TRADE
A global human-trafficking ring is at the center of Marco Kreuzpaintner's sensationalistic melodrama. In Mexico City, a young thug named Jorge (Cesar Ramos) discovers that his thirteen-year-old sister (Paulina Gaitan) has been abducted, along with a Polish beauty (Alicja Bachleda-Curus) and several other victims. Jorge trails the kidnappers to the U.S. border, and eventually Kevin Kline shows up, as Ray, an emotionally wounded Texas cop who seems to be searching for something. The salacious details of the horrific captivity, crossed with the high-gloss cinematography and Jorge and Ray's buddy-movie-style road trip, make this film, about a real and frightening subject, feel trivial.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

Also Playing

INTO THE WILD: Sunshine Cinema. **THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB:** In wide release. **THE LAST WINTER:** IFC Center. **SYDNEY WHITE:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Du Maurier on Film." Sept. 26 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "My Cousin Rachel" (1952, Henry Koster). ♦ Sept. 27 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Don't Look Now" (1973, Nicolas Roeg). ♦ Sept. 28 at

2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Jamaica Inn" (1939, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Sept. 29 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Birds" (1963, Hitchcock). ♦ Sept. 30 at 3, 6, and 9: "Rebecca" (1940, Hitchcock). ♦ Special screening. Oct. 2 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Trapped Ashes" (2006, Sean S. Cunningham, John Gaeta, Monte Hellman, Ken Russell, and Joe Dante).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Sept. 26-Oct. 9 at 1:40, 4:20, 7, and 9:30: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French) and "Antoine and Colette" (1962, Truffaut; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—In revival. Sept. 28-30 at noon: "The Makioka Sisters" (1983, Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Sept. 28-29: "The Holy Mountain" (1973, Alejandro Jodorowsky; in English and Spanish).

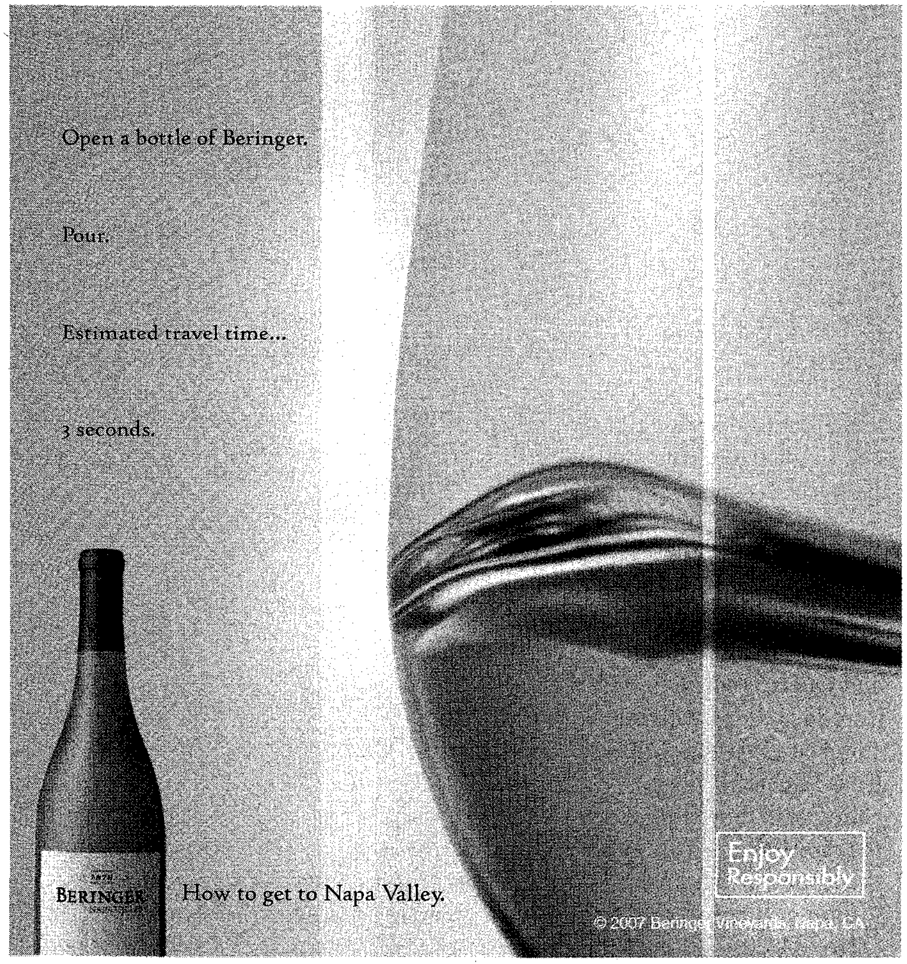
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through Oct. 6: The films of Pere Portabella. (See Readings and Talks.) Except where noted, all films are in Spanish. Sept. 26 at 5:30: "Vampire Cuadecuc" (1970), introduced by the director. ♦ Sept. 26 at 7:30 and Sept. 29 at 6:30: "The Silence Before Bach" (†). The Sept. 26 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ Sept. 27 at 6: "Umbracle" (1972). ♦ Sept. 27 at 8:30 and Sept. 29 at 2: "Warsaw Bridge" (1990; in Spanish and Catalan). ♦ Sept. 28 at 6:15 and Sept. 29 at 4:30: Films about the artist Joan Miró (1969-74). ♦ Sept. 30 at 2:30: "General Report on Some Interesting Facts for a Public Showing" (1976; in Spanish, Catalan, and Euskera). ♦ Oct. 1 at 6:15: "El Sopar" (1974; in Spanish and Catalan). ♦ Oct. 1 at 7:30: "Nocturno 29" (1968) and "Don't Count on Your Fingers" (1967). ♦ "In Memoriam: Thierry Kuntzel." Sept. 28 at 8: "La Jetée" (1962, Chris Marker; in French) and "Wavelength" (1967, Michael Snow). ♦ Special screening. Oct. 1 at 7: "Strange Culture" (2007, Lynn Hershman Leeson), followed by a Q. & A. with the filmmaker and the artist Steven Kurtz.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Preview screening. Sept. 29 at 2: "My Kid Could Paint That" (2007, Amir Bar-Lev), introduced by the director. ♦ Film noirs by Fritz Lang. Sept. 29 at 4:30: "The Blue Gardenia" (1953). ♦ Sept. 29 at 6:30: "The Big Heat" (1948). ♦ Sept. 30 at 3: "While the City Sleeps" (1956). ♦ Sept. 30 at 5: "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (†).

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Films are screened at a variety of theatres; for program information, visit www.filmlinc.com. Sept. 28 at 7:45 and 9: "The Darjeeling Limited" (2007, Wes Anderson). ♦ Sept. 29 at 10 A.M. and Sept. 30 at 9:15: "The Romance of Astrée and Céladon" (†). ♦ Sept. 29 at 12:30 and Oct. 1 at 9:15: "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" (2007, Cristian Mungiu; in Romanian). ♦ Sept. 29 at 3:30: "Hamlet" (1921, Sven Gade and Heinz Schall; silent). ♦ Sept. 29 at 3:30 and Sept. 30 at 6:45: "Married Life" (2007, Ira Sachs). ♦ Sept. 29 at 6 and Sept. 20 at 10 A.M.: "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" (2007, Julian Schnabel). ♦ Sept. 29 at 9: "Blade Runner: The Definitive Cut" (1982/2007, Ridley Scott). ♦ Sept. 29 at midnight and Sept. 30 at 4: "The Orphanage" (2007, Juan Antonio Bayona; in Spanish). ♦ Sept. 30 at 1 and Oct. 3 at 6: "The Man from London" (2007, Bela Tarr). ♦ Oct. 1 at 6 and Oct. 2 at 9:15: "Secret Sunshine" (2007, Lee Chang-dong; in Korean). ♦ Oct. 1 at 8: "The Iron Horse" (†). ♦ Oct. 2 at 6 and Oct. 3 at 9:15: "Stellet Licht" (2007, Carlos Reygadas; in Plattdeutsch).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—"Cabaret Cinema." Sept. 28 at 9:30: "'Round Midnight" (1986, Bertrand Tavernier; in English and French), introduced by the writer James Miller.

888.880.3462 zegna.com
Ermenegildo Zegna
GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE


Open a bottle of Beringer.
Pour.
Estimated travel time...
3 seconds.
BERINGER
How to get to Napa Valley.
Enjoy Responsibly
© 2007 Beringer Vineyards, Napa, CA

SCANDINAVIA HOUSE
58 Park Ave., at 38th St. (212-847-9779)—Through Dec. 15: "A Celebration of Danish Cinema: Nordisk Film at 100." Sept. 26 at 6:30 and Sept. 29 at 3: "Leaves of Satan's Book" (1921, Carl Theodor Dreyer; silent).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"John Sayles's Personal Choice." Sept. 30 at 7:30: "Them!" (1954, Gordon Douglas). ♦ Oct. 2 at 7:30: "The Hustler" (1961, Robert Rossen).

READINGS AND TALKS

PERE PORTABELLA
Portabella, an avant-garde Catalan filmmaker, makes his first U.S. appearances, discussing his art with the film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum. (Sept. 27 at 4.) The following day features three Portabella-related events, including a talk, at 4, between Portabella and Richard Peña, the director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center. (King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, New York University, 53 Washington Sq. S. For more information, call 212-998-3650. See also Movies—Museum of Modern Art.)

POETS HOUSE
The poet Maxine Kumin discusses her work with her fellow-writers Sharon Olds and Karen Swenson. (72 Spring St., 2nd fl. Sept. 27 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

PATRICK MCDONNELL
McDonnell, the creator of the comic strip "Mutts," talks about his life in the trade. (School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. 212-592-2010. Sept. 27 at 7.)

BARNES & NOBLE
The novelist Ann Patchett reads from her new book, "Run." (Broadway at 66th St. Sept. 27 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

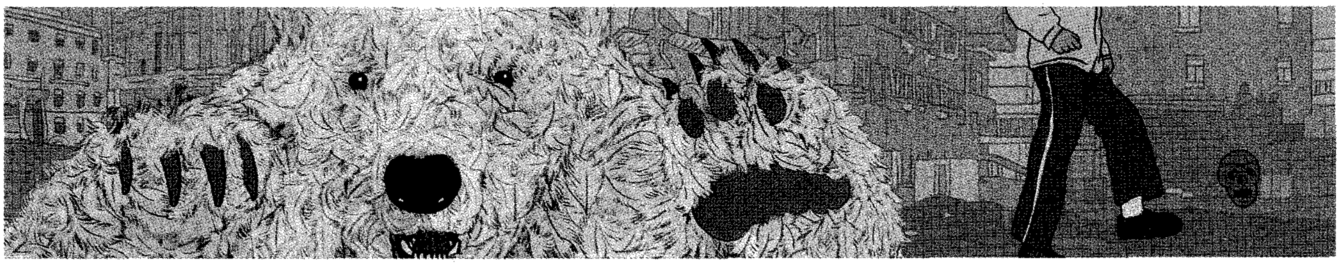
92ND STREET Y
The molecular biologist Eric Kandel interviews James D. Watson, whose latest book is "Avoid Boring People: Lessons from a Life in Science." (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 2 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"ED SCHMIDT'S DUMBOLIO"
The latest installation of this monthly variety show in the cavernous PowerHouse Arena performance space focusses on the theme of labor. It features the industrious musician and singer Rachelle Garniez, who will demonstrate her work ethic with her accordion; the composer and pianist Jed Distler, who will talk about the dead-end jobs he's held; Adele Meyers and her company of dancers; and the Reverend Vince Anderson and his Love Choir, who will perform his funky and earnest gospel music. The host is Ed Schmidt, a monologuist, actor, and playwright, who put on his one-man drama "The Last Supper" in his own Brooklyn kitchen and dining room in 2002-03. (37 Main St., Brooklyn. 718-666-3049, ext. 5. Sept. 29 at 8.)

"WORKS & PROCESS"
The Guggenheim's performance-and-discussion series celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the Broadway première of "West Side Story" with the psychiatrist and pianist Richard Kogan, who will talk about the life of its creator, Leonard Bernstein, and play some of his music. (Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at 7:30.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
Jeffery B. Ellis's passion for antique golf clubs knows no bounds: he has dedicated the past thirty years to collecting specimens from around the world and has published three books on the subject. Now **Sotheby's** will offer Ellis's collection at a massive two-day sale (Sept. 27-28) of over six hundred lots spanning the history of the sport, from a "square toe" light iron made in the seventeenth century to a matched set of twelve Bobby Jones clubs made in St. Andrews, circa 1930. It is followed (on Sept. 29) by an offering of Impressionist and modern art, featuring, among other items, a watercolor stage design by Nathalie Goncharova for the Ballets Russes production of "Le Coq d'Or." (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ **Christie's** revels in the refinements of twentieth-century design in two sales on Sept. 26. The three-day House Sale that follows (Oct. 1-3) contains some out-of-the-ordinary collections, including one of furniture and miscellanea from the old *Times* building on West Forty-third Street, and a selection of outfits from the collection of the late fashion maven and philanthropist Nan Kempner (Oct. 2). (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ The exuberant, eclectic Belle Époque is the subject of a yearly trio of sales of fine and decorative art objects at **Doyle**, the first of which will be held on Sept. 26. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.) ♦ **Phillips** jumps in on Sept. 29 with one of its periodic "Saturday@Phillips" offerings of reasonably priced art, design, photographs, and jewelry; the following day is given over to a high-class "garage sale" offered by Robert Wilson, who is moving out of his loft and is deaccessioning a number of pieces from his collection (including props from several of his theatrical productions). (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)



ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
FRENCH CONNECTION
Oct. 6-14

The films of the young French director Arnaud Desplechin combine a jolting emotional directness with chilly classicism. Moving Image shows four of Desplechin's films, including "Kings and Queen" (which he will introduce, along with the editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Jean-Michel Frodon), paired with four films of the director's choice, among them Ingmar Bergman's "Summer Interlude." (718-784-0077.)

NIGHT LIFE
ROCKET MAN
Oct. 10

Elton John and his longtime collaborator, Bernie Taupin, have created several of classic rock's most enduring songs. At Carnegie Hall, singers such as Aimee Mann, Roger McGuinn, and Raul Malo will honor the pair with a benefit for music education. (212-836-1853.)

THE THEATRE
TV TAKEDOWN
Oct. 15

Philo Farnsworth, a Utah farmer's son, conceived of television in 1921, when he was fourteen. Several years later, the Radio Corporation of America came up with a remarkably similar idea. The ensuing legal battle is the subject of Aaron Sorkin's play "The Farnsworth Invention," at the Music Box. Hank Azaria and Jimmi Simpson star. (212-239-6200.)

ART
THE ITALIAN JOB
Oct. 21-Jan. 7, 2008

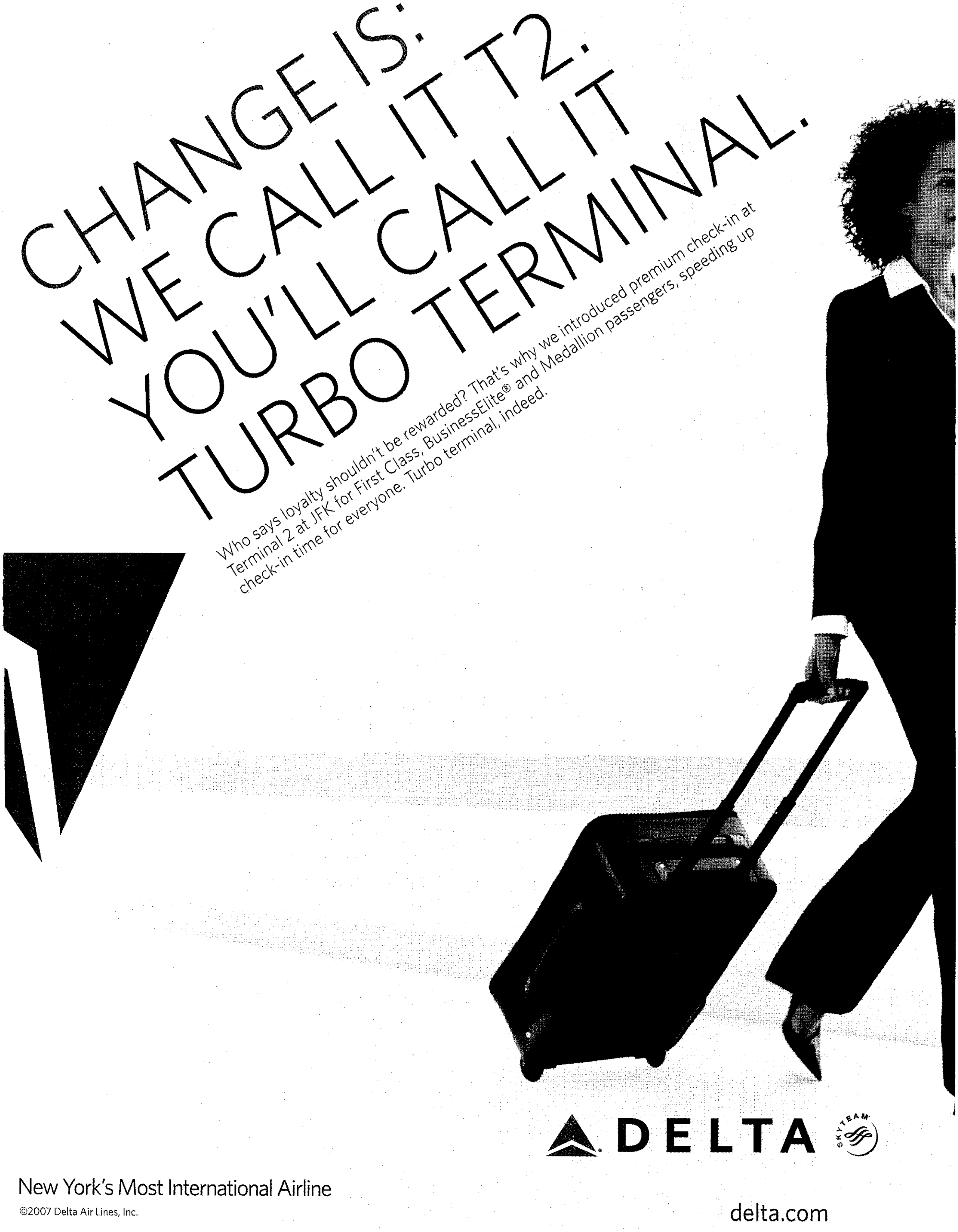
If Big Bird fell for a grizzly, their offspring might look something like Paola Pivi's sculpture, in the upcoming "Senso Unico" at P.S. 1. The survey of contemporary works by eight Italian artists will also include Paolo Canevari's haunting video of a boy kicking a rubber replica of a human skull around bombed-out ruins in Belgrade. (718-784-2084.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
SELECTED SHORTS
Oct. 23

Zankel Hall encourages both innovation and tradition. In this concert by the Takács Quartet, Philip Seymour Hoffman will read excerpts from Philip Roth's "Everyman" between performances of works by Arvo Pärt and Philip Glass. (212-247-7800.)

Paola Pivi's feathered-bear sculpture, at P.S. 1.

RUTU MODAN



CHANGE IS:
WE CALL IT T2.
YOU'LL CALL IT
TURBO TERMINAL.

Who says loyalty shouldn't be rewarded? That's why we introduced premium check-in at Terminal 2 at JFK for First Class, BusinessElite® and Medallion passengers, speeding up check-in time for everyone. Turbo terminal, indeed.

DELTA SKYTEAM

New York's Most International Airline

©2007 Delta Air Lines, Inc.

delta.com

BEHIND THE SCENES

THE DIGITAL TRICKMEISTER OF “HEROES”

Emmy®-nominated Eric Grenaudier, visual effects supervisor for “Heroes,” is responsible for the mind-bending effects conjured after the cameras *stop* rolling. Unlike the practical-effects crew, whose on-set sorcery involves makeup and prosthetics, the visual-effects team enlists the magic of the computer. Whether freezing time or enabling characters to fly or teleport themselves, Grenaudier and company are digital masters who make the impossible look real on “Heroes.” This is the third in a series of interviews with the talent behind this NBC breakout hit series.

GRENAUDIER

Characters with super powers are at the heart of* “Heroes.” *About how many special visual effects are created for them in each episode?

GRENAUDIER: At minimum, forty or fifty—although some shows have more than a hundred. On a ten-day shooting schedule, it's pretty hectic.

Who else works with you on the* “Heroes” *special visual effects?

GRENAUDIER: I am one of a team that includes compositors, map painters, and 3-D artists. All of us have a hand in the process. As a supervisor, I translate the director's vision into something that can be achieved technically and financially.

I understand that the first iconic scene when Hiro Nakamura transports himself to Times Square was not shot in New York—nor in any other city, for that matter.

GRENAUDIER: “Heroes” is shot on stages in Los Angeles, yet a lot of the scenes are meant to occur in Japan or New York City. When Hiro materializes in Times Square, he is actually being shot on a green-screen stage. We matched the camera motion and lighting on him to a live-action plate of New York that was previously shot.

“Save the cheerleader!” How does the impervious-to-bodily-harm teen Claire manage to regenerate after every accident?

GRENAUDIER: It's fairly complicated. Last season we had a scene where she walked out of a building after a huge explosion, totally burned. Claire's face and body were blackened with makeup, but all her burns and healing were done in the computer. It is tracked to whatever body part is supposed to be damaged. Then we create animation so that body part can be “healed.” We have a digital version of the actress that we work with.

AQUOS
HEROES

THE IMAGE IS SHARP. The picture is brilliant. The clarity is unsurpassed, and the AQUOS LC TV is slim, lightweight, and easily wall-mountable.

PETRELLI BROTHERS

Since a double's walk did not match the actress's, we did all the visual effects based on the live action of Claire, fully tracking both the camera motion and her own as she was walking.

Next you're going to tell us that the Petrelli brothers can't really fly.

GRENAUDIER: Getting them airborne is a combination of practical and visual effects. Sometimes a flying sequence starts with Peter or Nathan hanging from wires on a blue screen. Or the actor will jump a short distance. Or he's pulled by a rope. Then we replace that with a computer graphics version of the actor you can follow in the sky.

The story is about suspension of belief, after all . . .

GRENAUDIER: We are here to serve the story. If people watch the show and don't realize we did anything, that makes me very happy.

Does being broadcast in HDTV make it more difficult for you to create believable effects on* “Heroes”*?

GRENAUDIER: The resolution of HDTV has made creating special visual effects particularly challenging. In many ways it's even sharper than film. More and more people are buying HDTVs. Screens are bigger and the sharpness and color range of these high-end monitors are improving by the day. You can't hide anything. The flip side is that the quality of your work gets seen in all its glory utilizing the full character of the set.

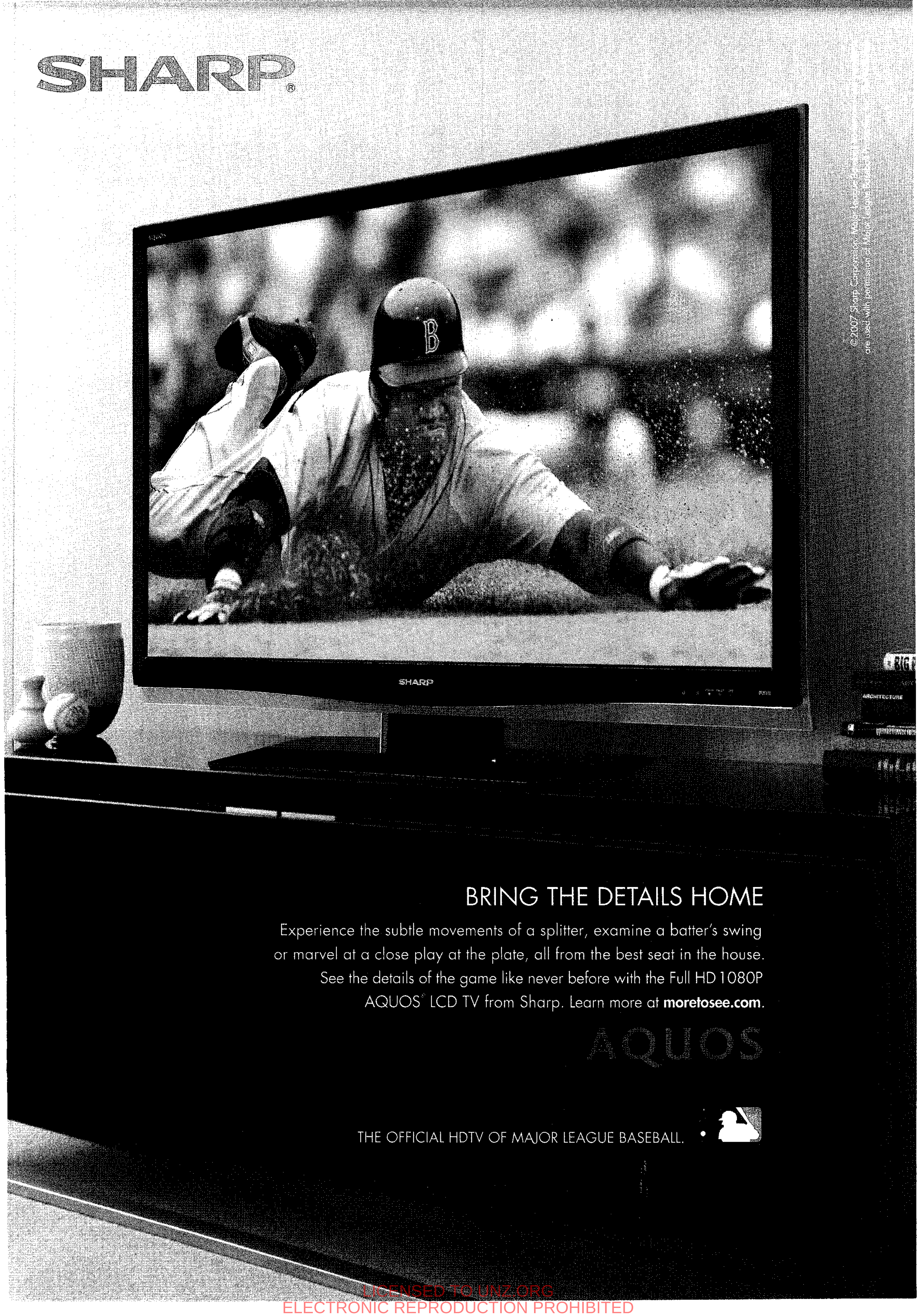
Do you have HDTV monitors in the studio?

GRENAUDIER: Yes, we do, and we watch all of the dailies on them.

“Heroes” can be seen Mondays, 9–10 P.M. ET on NBC.

Use of the Emmy trademark and servicemarks require the prior written permission of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Sharp and AQUOS are registered trademarks of Sharp Corporation. Screen images simulated. All “Heroes” photos courtesy of NBCU Photo Bank

VIEW THIS EMMY®-NOMINATED NBC SERIES ON AN EMMY® AWARD-WINNING FULL HD 1080P AQUOS®.
EXPLORE SHARP AQUOS® AT AQUOS.COM



SHARP®

BRING THE DETAILS HOME

Experience the subtle movements of a splitter, examine a batter's swing or marvel at a close play at the plate, all from the best seat in the house. See the details of the game like never before with the Full HD 1080P AQUOS® LCD TV from Sharp. Learn more at **moretosee.com**.

AQUOS

THE OFFICIAL HDTV OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.

©2007 Sharp Corporation. Major League
are used with permission of Major League Baseball

Feel valued, no matter how much you're worth.

How much do you have to invest to earn some respect? At Schwab, everyone is an important client, regardless of account size. Every client has access to live help from investment professionals who can help you plan and manage your investments. Not to mention all our clients have access to our best third-party research, resources like our industry-recognized Schwab Equity Ratings,® and our best quarterly reporting. Because at Schwab, you don't have to qualify—you just have to invest.

Get the service, and the respect, you deserve:
1-800-4SCHWAB / SCHWAB.COM

TALK TO
CHUCK
®

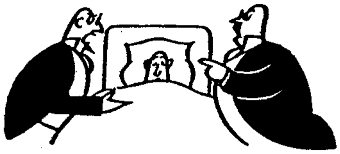
charles SCHWAB

©2007 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC. (0407-4702) ADP36943

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
GHOSTBUSTERS



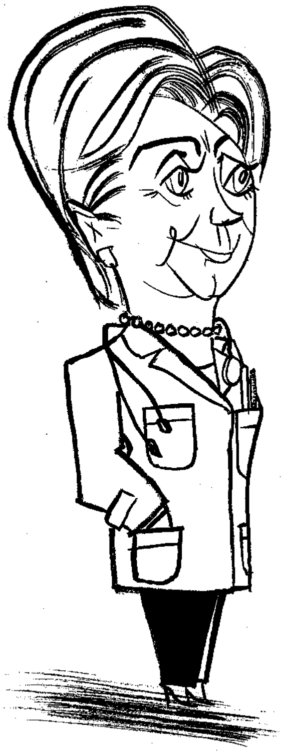
A spectre is haunting the leading candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination. It was with her last week when she outlined her health-care proposal, and it was no wispy phantom. It was an apparition solid enough to attract the notice of political reporters inured to paranormal phenomena by long months on the campaign trail.

> DES MOINES, Sept. 17—Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton unveiled a plan on Monday to guarantee health insurance to all Americans, but in a way carefully designed to avoid the political flaws in her failed proposal of 1993-94.

That's how the *Times* led its Tuesday story from Iowa. But whether the collapse of the most ambitious domestic policy initiative of the (Bill) Clinton Administration is a horrid fiend, red of eye and gnarled of hand, or more of a winsome Friendly Ghost, like Casper, depends on one's point of view. Senator Clinton, naturally, is of the Casper school. In her Des Moines speech, she said she had "learned some valuable lessons that have shaped how I approach health-care reform today." Her opponents for the nomination, naturally, would prefer that voters see her experience as something more apt to be repeated than learned from. "The cost of failure fourteen years ago isn't anybody's scars or political fortune," John Edwards said. "It's the millions of Americans who have now gone without health care for more than fourteen years." And Barack Obama said, "The real key to passing any health care reform is the ability to bring people together in an open, transparent process that builds a broad consensus for change."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

What this kind of (still relatively civilized) political jousting should not be allowed to obscure is that—within the Democratic Party, at least—a broad consensus for change has already emerged. Clinton's proposal comes nearly eight months after Edwards's and four months after Obama's, but all three are remarkably similar, and those of Edwards and Clinton nearly identical. She and her staff used the extra time to advantage: her program is the most expertly packaged and tidiest of the three, and manages to sound at once nonthreatening and far-reaching. If you like the health plan you've already got—and, gee, who doesn't?—you keep it. If you don't like it, or if you're uninsured, you can choose from the same menu of private plans offered to members of Congress. Or you can opt for a new public plan modelled on Medicare. You can't be blackballed or socked with unaffordable premiums on account of having a "preëxisting condition." You can buy a gold-plated executive policy if you wish, but you'll have to pay the difference yourself, with post-tax dollars. Whatever you choose, you have to take it upon yourself to choose *something*—the "individual mandate" that policy wonks talk about. It's like having to get car insurance. Clinton estimates the cost of all this at a hundred and ten billion dollars a year—a third of the annual bill for Medicare. The bulk of it would come from letting the Bush tax cuts on incomes over a quarter of a million dollars expire on schedule.



There's a lot more detail, of course. And by the time the Clinton plan—or the Edwards plan or the Obama plan—got fed through the congressional wood chipper, it would probably make Rube Goldberg's craziest invention look like the Lever of Archimedes. But it would do two important things. First, it would end the disgrace of America's being the only advanced capitalist democracy on earth that does not guarantee health care to its citizens. Second, with any luck, it would create a slow-motion showdown between private and public health insurance. Given that private insurers spend around fifteen per cent of their budgets on administration—much of it devoted to keeping the sick off the rolls and, failing that, figuring out ways to avoid paying their medical bills—while Medicare spends two per cent, it ought to be an interesting and instructive contest.

The Clintons blew it last time, but they weren't the first to break their picks against the unyielding granite of the American political system. Every Democratic President since Truman has been elected on a platform of national health insurance, and, in spite of public support for the idea by majorities as big as those in Europe, every one of them has failed to get it enacted. In this country, elections are just the beginning. To get to the finish line, a big reform has to run a gantlet of three independently elected "governments"—not just the Presidency but also the House and the Senate, all the members of which are elected independently of one another, too. Besides all this, the committees of Congress, where most business actually gets done, provide plenty of dark corners where determined, well-financed, well-organized special interests can make short work of an obvious but amorphous majority will.

We've been here before, but this time the stars may really be coming into alignment. Our health-care system has continued to deteriorate. We spend twice as much as the French and the Germans and two and a half times as much as the Brits, yet we die sooner and our babies die in greater numbers. Thirty-eight million Americans were uninsured in 2000; now it's forty-seven million. Employer-based health insurance is increasingly expensive, stingy, and iffy. Companies, especially manufacturing companies, are beginning to realize that being deputized to pay the health-care costs of their employees and retirees puts them at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy.

Whether change comes will depend entirely on the next election. If a Democrat wins the Presidency after outlining his or her intentions as specifically as the leading contenders have done, and if the Democrats substantially increase their congressional majorities, then it will happen. If they don't, it won't.

"People have access to health care in America," President Bush remarked last summer, expressing the view of many conservative Republicans. "After all, you just go to an emergency room." And, last Thursday, for what he called "philosophical" reasons, he promised to veto an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, a modest federal effort to help states cover children from poor and near-poor families. The Republicans who hope to succeed him offer conservative think-tank homilies about the glories of the market. Last week, Mitt Romney denounced Clinton's proposal—and, by extension, those of Edwards and Obama (to say nothing of the plan which he himself negotiated with the Democratic legislature when he was governor of Massachusetts, and which contains most of the same elements)—as "a European-style socialized-medicine plan." This rhetorical zombie, though, isn't as scary as it used to be. Americans already have some experience with European-style socialized-medicine plans. The two most efficient, merciful, and politically unchallengeable components of the American health-care system—Medicare and the Veterans Administration—closely resemble what the French and the British, respectively, provide to all their citizens. No need to get spooked.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

AT SEA

THE D DOCK CURSE

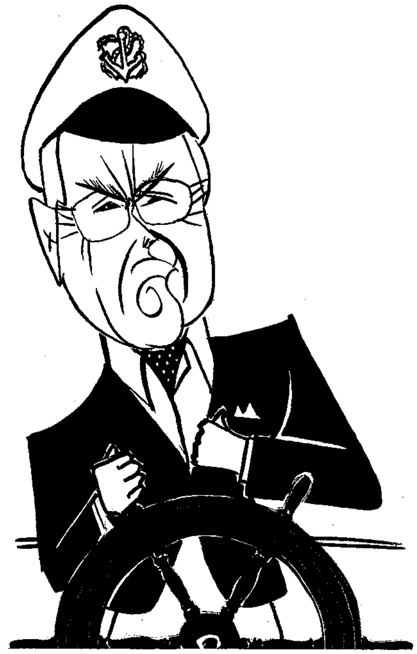
There's something about politicians and boats. After John F. Kennedy was assassinated, all records of his visits to the Presidential yacht Sequoia were burned in an oil drum. A photograph of Donna Rice sitting on Senator Gary Hart's knee aboard the Monkey Business doomed his Presidential campaign. Former Representative James Traficant is serving eight years in prison for tax evasion, racketeering, and taking bribes, including thousands of dollars in repairs for his yacht. Before former Representative Robert Ney went to prison for accepting gifts from the lobbyist Jack Abramoff, he docked his fifty-four-foot yacht, Cong Won, at the Gangplank Marina. And Abramoff himself was convicted of fraud in the purchase of, among other things, a fleet of gaming boats.

But, amid the ruckus that followed the arrest of Senator Larry Craig for allegedly soliciting sex from a plainclothes officer in an airport rest room, little attention was paid to his unusual Washington, D.C., address: 1000 Water Street. There, across the Washington Channel from the Jefferson Memorial, is the Capital Yacht Club, where Craig lives on a forty-two-foot Bertram yacht called the Suz II, named for his wife, Suzanne, who stays back home in Idaho. Craig, a fastidious man who was known to pick up trash around the club, is well liked by his fellow-yachtsmen. (Explaining his behavior in the airport stall, he told the police that he had bent down to pick up a piece of paper.) "He is a creature of habit," a club member said recently. In the weeks during which Craig pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and then started trying to withdraw the plea, the Suz II floated empty in its slip at D Dock.

Craig's boat shares D Dock with the Cw S Way, a thirty-eight-foot Chris-Craft out of Valdez, Alaska. That boat's owner is Senator Ted Stevens, the longest-serving Republican in the Senate. In July, federal agents raided Stevens's home outside Anchorage; now the F.B.I. is investigating whether he took illegal gifts from an oil-field-services company. (Stevens denies any wrongdoing.) Craig sponsored Stevens for membership in the club, describing him, on the application, as an "experienced boater, great guy, and longtime friend."

Another of Craig's neighbors on D Dock was Randy (Duke) Cunningham, the California Republican congressman who is serving a prison sentence for accepting millions of dollars in bribes, including the hundred-and-forty-thousand-dollar cost of the Duke Stir, a forty-two-foot yacht. On board, Cunningham kept a document that prosecutors called the "bribe menu." The Duke Stir's previous owners, a gay couple, had named the vessel Buoy Toy, but Cunningham quickly changed it. "I bought the boat," he once said, "not the life style."

The Capital Yacht Club has weathered worse crises. Its first headquarters, a houseboat, sprang a leak and sank in 1903. The following year, a member was killed by a steamer's paddle wheel. Until recently, the club marked the passing of each day with a cannon blast. The facilities consist of a plantation-style roofed clubhouse, where members can pick up mail, do laundry, and drink at the bar in flip-flops, and four docks that jut out into the channel. D Dock happens to be close to the parking lot, making for a shorter walk to a congressman's chauffeur-driven car. (U.S. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, a former Idaho senator and governor, also lives on D Dock. Kempthorne, who is so far scandal-free, has a fifty-three-foot yacht that used to be called High Spirits, until he changed it to the Liberty.)


Senator Larry Craig

"Are all these politicians even good for us?" one club member asked last week. "We used to think they were great. They could lobby on our behalf. Now it's spinning the opposite way." In the past two years, thanks to the men of D Dock, club members have been subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury, they have witnessed federal agents on a raid, and they have grown used to reporters gathering like gulls on the sea wall. "We're all wondering if there's something in the water," one member said. "Or maybe the 'D' stands for 'dummy.' "

—*Seth Hettena*

DANCE PARTY
AUNT JANNY

So Janet Reno was hanging out by the jukebox at Manitoba's last Wednesday afternoon, down on Avenue B. She was sitting in a booth, sipping from a bottle of water, and staring straight ahead, in the direction of daylight, which there isn't much of in Manitoba's. She had on a black pants suit and moccasins. Her eyeglasses were a bit smudged. The owner of the bar, Handsome Dick Manitoba, the lead singer for the Dictators, the proto-punk band, had fed the jukebox with dollar bills, granting Reno credit for fifteen songs.

Reno's first pick was "The Ballad of Ira Hayes," by Johnny Cash. The song's taps prelude rang out, and Reno said, "Ira Hayes," in a plain, flat voice, as though citing legal precedent. She had been, in her youth, a country-and-Western gal. "We would go across the Tamiami Trail, Miami to Naples, and you could run into some of the best jukeboxes around," Reno recalled. "We saved our quarters. When I was being shrewd, I could get five songs a quarter. You got an extra one if you dropped your quarter in right."

Reno was accompanied by her niece's husband, Ed Pettersen, a musician who had run with the Dictators in the early nineties. Pettersen, tall and voluble, with a shaved head and a wallet on a chain, addressed Reno as Aunt Janny and Manitoba as Uncle Handsome. They'd have made a fine pair.

In 1998, on a visit to Aunt Janny in Washington, Pettersen had played two of his compositions—folk ballads about Mexico and the Old West—on his guitar, and she was so taken with the density of historical detail in them that she urged him to consider putting together an entire album of songs focussing on key periods in American history. She felt that this would be a great way to teach young people about the country's past. On a piece of paper, she made a list of two dozen seminal events, eras, and themes. "I didn't know what Ed would do with it," she said. "I got back to my business as Attorney General."

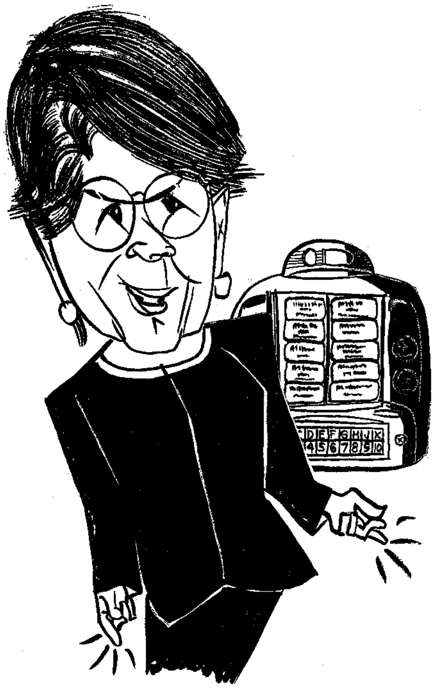
What Pettersen did was assemble a list of four dozen classic American songs and invite various contemporary artists to record them. The result, nine years later, is a three-disk set called "Song of America," which carries the listener from 1492 ("Lakota Dream Song") to 2001 (Alan Jackson's "Where Were You When the World Stopped Turning?"), passing some engagingly odd covers along the way, such as "Stars and Stripes Forever," by the Hawaiian ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, and "Little Boxes," by the indie weirdo Devendra Banhart. Reno is credited as the album's executive producer. Her favorite numbers are "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Home on the Range."

"I think Patsy Cline was a genius," she said, impassively, in the gloom of Manitoba's. Pettersen stood to punch in the numbers for "I Fall to Pieces," Aunt Janny's next pick. "I frankly cannot carry a tune, but there is music that I know is good, and I enjoy it thoroughly."

The previous evening, she had sat in the plaza outside Lincoln Center, listening to a free amplification of Dvořák's Carnival Overture. Her most powerful musical memory is of visiting her uncle in Germany as a thirteen-year-old; he served as a judge on the Allied High Commission during the occupation. She went by Dachau one day and went to "La Traviata" the next. "I had thought opera was a bunch of screeching ladies," she said. "Suddenly, it became music in my ears." She knows almost nothing about rock and roll, although Pettersen has been overseeing an incremental education. He took her to the Grammys a couple of years ago, where she enjoyed Melissa Etheridge's rousing cover of "Piece of My Heart." Reno has done karaoke once, at a community event in Miami. "I was Aretha Franklin, singing 'Respect,' " she said. "I didn't do well. I felt very like a duck out of water." In 2000, the attorney general of Trinidad and Tobago presented her with a parting gift of a steel drum, on which she occasionally attempts to tap out phrases of Jimmy Buffett's. As for hip-hop, she said, "I look forward to the time when we won't be as reliant on rap." Still, she remembered that, when she was a state attorney in Florida, Luther Campbell, of 2 Live Crew, produced a song that aided her campaign against deadbeat dads. "The song went somewhat like this," she said: " 'Janet Reno came to town collecting all the mo-ney / If you don't pay she'll put your blank in jail.' "

Chuck Berry was playing on the jukebox. Reno's nephew-in-law had taken over. "What happened to Patsy?" she said.

"There's no Patsy, but I have some other good stuff happening," he said. "We have Hank Williams. The Coasters. Merle Haggard."



Janet Reno

"I just wonder what the world would've been like if Patsy Cline had lived," Reno said.

Pettersen began to talk excitedly about the genius of Haggard. The Coasters were singing "Searchin'." Aunt Janny checked her watch, shouldered her purse, stood up slowly, and said, "Well." She was due at Fordham School of Law. She headed for the door.

—*Nick Paumgarten*

THE ARTISTIC LIFE
YOU SAY VIDAL

The sculptor Not Vital is an instigator of ridiculousness. For a 2004 work, "Camel," he commissioned silversmiths in Agadez, Niger, to cast sixteen smallish orbs, filling each, in a ship-in-a-bottle-like trick, with the remains of an entire dromedary. Vital, who is fifty-nine, spends part of the year in Agadez, where he lives in a mud house. Topping its exterior walls, like barbed wire, are the horns of hundreds of cows, salvaged from the local slaughterhouse. Recently, Vital escorted his latest series of metallic vessels to New York. They commemorate an assortment of famous people—including, it turns out, a long-lost relative—and, thanks to the increasing exigencies of airport security, contain mostly photographs instead of desiccated animals. An empty box, Vital explained, is considered a waste by his Nigerien compatriots.

Vital takes the folkways of his adopted habitat in earnest (when in residence, he wears a talisman), but he is equally beholden to Sent, Switzerland, where his family members, thought to be the descendants of Roman troops, have lived and died since the reign of Tiberius. To assist him in installing a show of new work at Sperone Westwater, downtown, he had brought along three kinsmen: Cla, Corsin, and Andrei, all skilled craftsmen of Swiss stone pine, a wood that, like them, is native to the Engadine valley of the Alps, and renowned for its heady fragrance and its purported ability to lower the heart rate.

As a power drill whined in the background, Vital ducked into a room the size of a sauna, which his relatives had constructed for the show of *Pinus cembra*. The area was suffused with an herbal scent. "The house I live in in Switzerland was built in 1642, and the sap still creates a strong odor," Vital said. "This show is a lot about smell."

Vital, who was wearing 501s, slung low, and a white short-sleeved shirt, stepped out of the chamber. He pointed out two floor-to-ceiling pillars. "I'm going to cover these in ground coffee," he said. Coffee is a common denominator of Vital's worlds: a product of Africa and a staple of Italy, where, in the fourteenth century, many of Vital's forebears migrated to open cafés and pâtisseries. (Vital, who plans to build a house on every continent, also has a place in Lucca.) He is partial to less homey aromas as well. "Certain smells that are really horrible I appreciate," he said. "Like skunk."

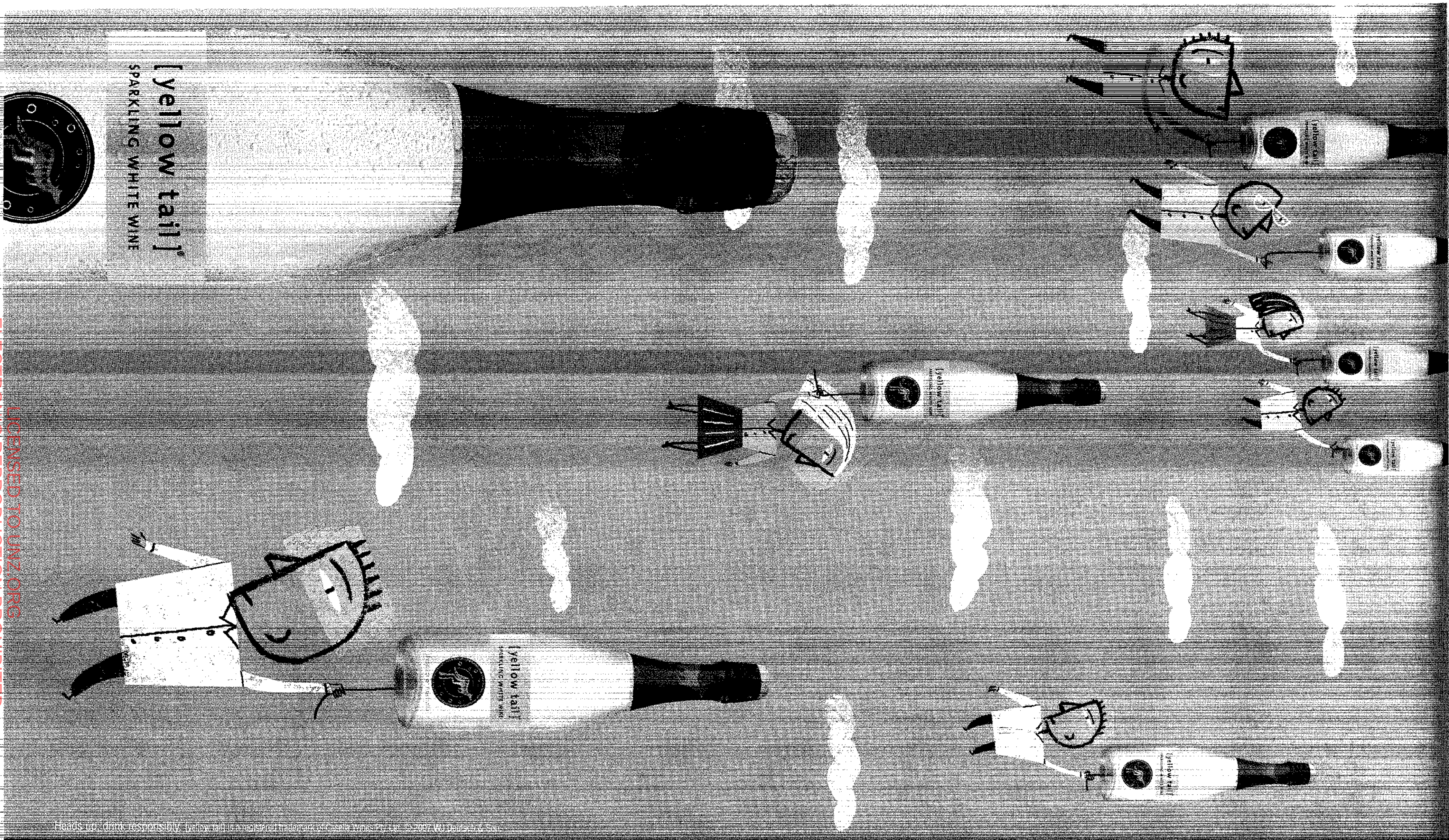
He led the way to another gallery, where the newest vessels were arranged on a ledge. Each had two parts, their dimensions dictated by the personage's date of birth: a base, representing the year, and another case, stacked on top, for which the depth corresponded to the day, and the height to the month. Thus, Canova (November 1, 1757) took the shape of a skyscraper with a cell-phone tower on top. Christian Dior (January 21, 1905) approximated a hatbox, while Gore Vidal (October 3, 1925) resembled something closer, strangely, to a dreidel.

Vital's family name actually *was* Vidal, until his grandfather was forced to change it, in the nineteen-forties, during a push for linguistic standardization. The clan's native language is Romansh, a Rhaeto-Romance dialect that is spoken by only thirty-five thousand people, many of whom share Vital's surname and live in his home town. Vital né Vidal speaks four languages in addition to Romansh, and one day a few years ago he was reading an essay by Gore Vidal (a friend had recommended it) when he happened upon a reference to a Swiss forebear of the author. Vital recalled thinking, If his name is Vidal, he has to be from Sent.

At lunch the following Sunday, Vital asked his mother if she had ever heard of a Felix Vidal, the relative that the book had mentioned. "Yes, yes, I heard about him!" she said. "He went to America." So Not Vital wrote a letter to Gore Vidal, suggesting that they might be related. Vidal proposed that Vital visit him in Los Angeles. When he did, last spring, they compared snapshots and Vidal was delighted to discern a family resemblance.

After Vidal's warm reception, Vital felt obliged to reciprocate. Last summer, he threw a party in Sent in Vidal's honor. "We had *Bündnerfleisch* and sweets. The mayor came, and the village brass band was playing, and Gore loved it," Vital recalled. Vidal was already familiar with the area. "He said, 'Of course I know Sent.' He used to have an apartment in Klosters, where Greta Garbo was his neighbor, and when there wasn't much to do he would cross the mountain for dinner."

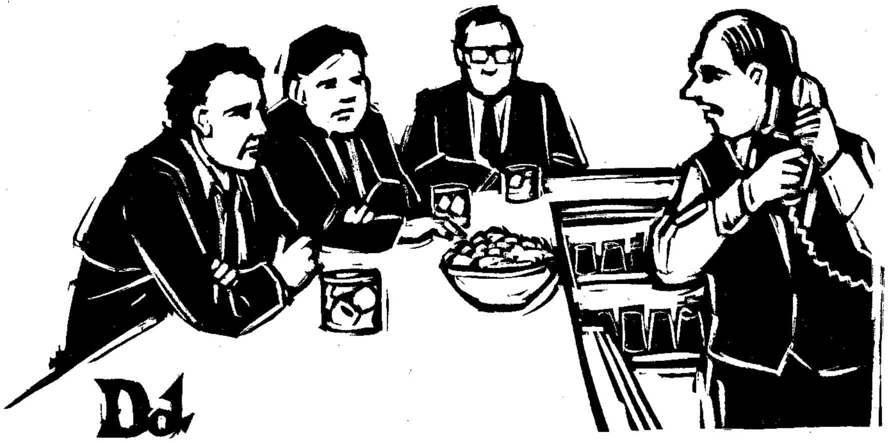
The last time Vital and Vidal were together, the conversation turned to


[yellow tail]®
SPARKLING WHITE WINE
[yellow tail]
SPARKLING WHITE WINE

Heads up: drink responsibly. [yellow tail] is a registered trademark of Casella Wines Pty Ltd. © 2007 W.J. Deutsch & Sons.

new
[yellow tail] sparkling wine

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



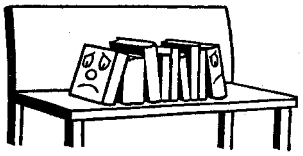
“Charlie won’t be here. He’s drinking from home today.”

• •

politics. “We talked about the upcoming elections,” Vital recalled, “and he said his cousin could have a chance.” He meant Al.

—Lauren Collins

THE PICTURES
BOOKS IN BULK



Between digging for artifacts and dangling from cliffs, Indiana Jones must have very little time to read, never mind to buy books. Luckily, he has a team of people to do it for him. Dr. Jones—as represented by the set decorators for the forthcoming film “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull”—recently engaged the Strand Bookstore’s Books-by-the-Foot service, which provides ready-made libraries for private homes, stores, and movie sets.

Although prop books are meant to be seen and not read, they have to evoke a mise en scène, inside and out. For Indiana Jones, the filmmakers specified that the books cover such topics as paleontology, marine biology, and pre-Columbian society. They had to be in muted colors and predate 1957. “People have gotten so character-specific nowadays,” Jenny McKibben, a manager at the store, said. “It can’t just be color anymore. With high-def, they can just freeze the film and say, ‘Oh, that’s so inappropriate.’ ”

Since the program’s inception, in 1986, the Strand has built scores of imaginary reading rooms, from the prison library in “Oz” to the Barnes & Noble clone in “You’ve Got Mail.” Clients also include window dressers, commercial architects (the Strand furnished each floor in the Library Hotel with a different Dewey decimal category), and people with more shelf space than leisure time. Kelsey Grammer requested all hardback fiction in two of his homes, while Steven Spielberg, who, incidentally, is the director of the new Indiana Jones movie, allowed a wider range (cookbooks, children’s books, volumes on art and film) to penetrate his Hamptons estate. “There have been a lot of biographies on him, so I put those in there, too,” Nancy Bass Wyden, a co-owner of the store, said.

Customers can choose from eighteen basic library styles, for purchase or rental. “Bargain books,” a random selection of hardbacks, is the cheapest, at ten dollars per foot of shelf space. For thirty dollars, clients can customize the color. For seventy-five, they can get a “leather-looking” library, which, as the Strand’s Web site puts it, “is often mistaken for leather.”

Despite this emphasis on form over content, McKibben approaches her job more like a librarian than like a decorator. “It’s really just knowing books and knowing what people read,” she said, as she sorted through stacks in her third-floor office. In front of her, a shelf held volumes reserved for a wedding centerpiece (Russell Banks’s “The Darling,” A. N. Wilson’s “The Victorians”).

To her left was a rolling cart on which she was building a personal library. “The designers or the clients tell me a little about themselves,” McKibben said, dragging the cart toward her. “This one is for a family.” She pointed out “kid-friendly” books on the Beatles and Charlie Chaplin, and a Dave Eggers volume (“because there are teen-agers in the house”). McKibben spun the cart around to the father’s section. “We’re kind of guessing the character,” she said. “The husband is in finance. He likes the History Channel, the Biography Channel. It’s like my dad, and I know what’s in my dad’s library.” The selections included a biography of John Quincy Adams and a hulking gold volume called “India After Gandhi.”

Downstairs on the shopping floor, Bibbi Taylor, a Strand manager, perused the Africa aisle for Indiana Jones material. Taylor has a discerning eye for historical-looking history books. She quickly eliminated a rust-colored Paul Theroux and a baby-blue Alexandra Fuller (both were too recent), and zeroed in on a beat-up orange hardback. “This looks good,” she said, pulling out “The White Nile,” Alan Moorehead’s classic history of Egyptian exploration. “It has that older worn look, which makes sense, because Indy’s on the road all the time.” When Taylor saw the copyright date, 1960, she recanted. “That’s pushing it,” she said.

Taylor weaved around some undergraduates and shifted two bookcases to the left. “Indy’s a philosopher of sorts, so I’d want some ancient-Greek stuff,” she said. She leaned down to a lower shelf and pulled out a green book with a faded spine. “Oh, yes! A ’39 ‘Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture,’ ” she said. “This could be something that he’s read many times.”

“Paideia” in hand, Taylor recalled other recent projects. For a drug dealer in “American Gangster,” she gathered leather-looking books. For the gym-trainer character that Frances McDormand plays in an upcoming Coen brothers film, she collected self-help titles and romance novels (“a lot of Fabio”). Indiana Jones, though, was clearly her favorite client. “Dr. Jones, he’s my hero,” Taylor said. “I get to get inside his mind, touch the books that Harrison Ford will touch.”

—Austin Kelley

© 2007 BASF Corporation

EXPECT
CLEANER AIR AHEAD

While we can't do much about the traffic, we can help clean the air. PremAir® from BASF is the first and only automotive commercial catalyst that destroys ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, and converts it into pure, breathable oxygen. Already installed on over 3 million car radiators, PremAir turns cars into veritable smog-eating machines. It's the kind of sustainable innovation from BASF that leaves everyone breathing easier. Learn more at basf.com/stories

Helping Make Products Better®

BASF
The Chemical Company

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

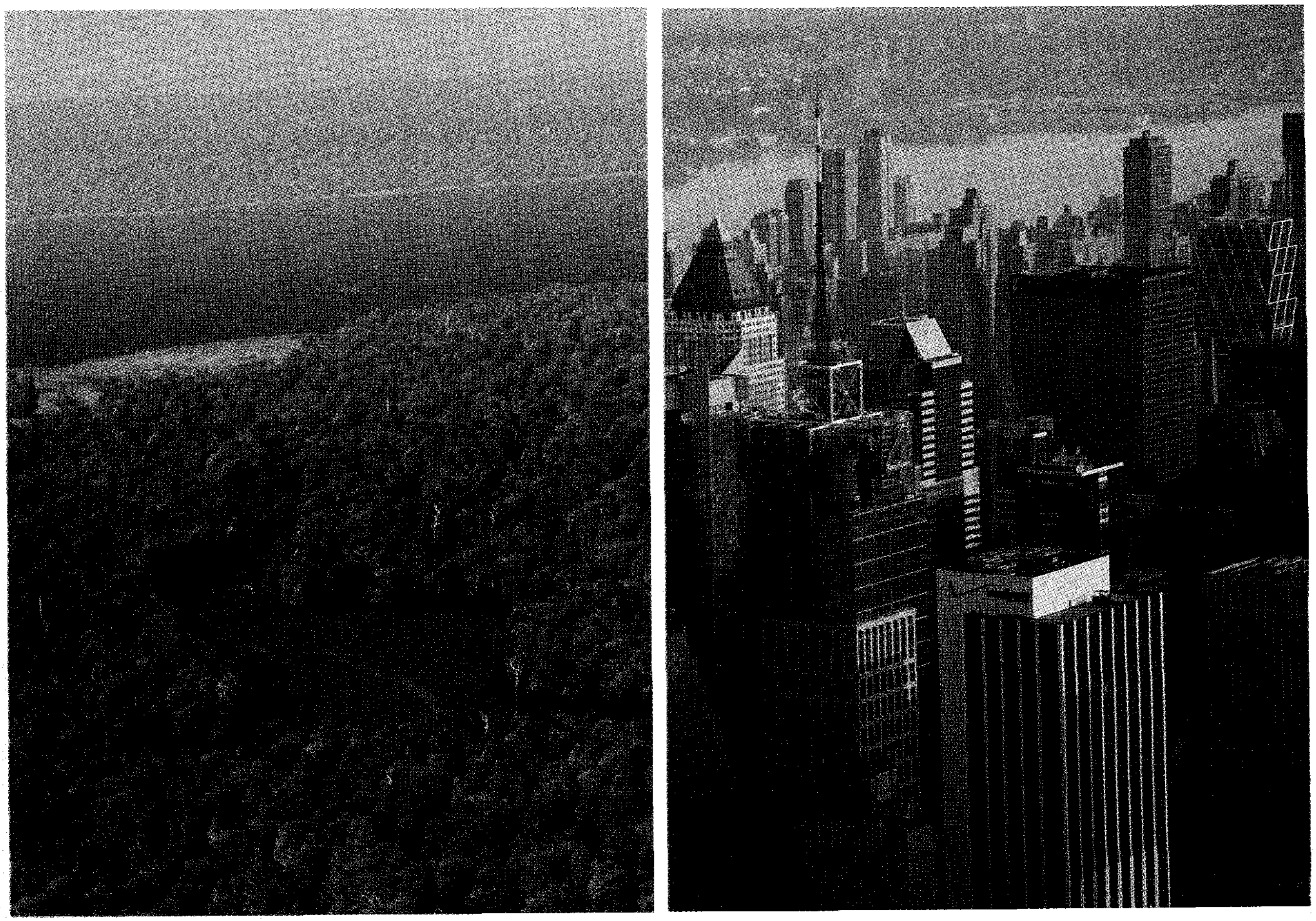
THE MANNAHATTA PROJECT

What did New York look like before we arrived?

BY NICK PAUMGARTEN

It is remarkable, in the accounts of the earliest European visitors to the North American continent, how little interest some of these explorers seemed to take in the land they had just found. They hardly went ashore. As seamen—and seekers of clear passage to the Orient—they were more interested in the currents, tides, soundings, and shoals. The land, rich as it was, was at first not much more than an impediment. Of course, all that changed soon enough.

In early September, 1609, Henry Hudson and his crew sailed their *jacht*, the Half Moon, through the Narrows at the head of New York's lower bay, the point beyond which, it is generally believed, Giovanni da Verrazzano had not progressed, eighty-five years before. This likely made the eighteen or so Englishmen and Dutchmen aboard the Half Moon the first Europeans to venture up the Hudson River and therefore the first to get a good look at the island known to the natives as Mannahatta. The only surviving account of this journey is the diary of one of Hudson's crew, Robert Juet (who, on another voyage, a year later, helped lead a mutiny, stranding Hudson, his young son, and seven others in a small boat near the Arctic Circle). Juet's records of wind directions and river depths are precise, but from his descriptions it's often impossible to decipher where exactly Hudson was on the river. Conjecture abounds, as do chauvinistic claims; various modern interpreters place a September 13th oyster feast at Spuyten Duyvil or Yonkers. At any rate, the crew sailed upriver as far as Albany, where shallow waters forced them to turn back: this wasn't the way to Cathay. On the trip downriver, a crew member shot and killed a native who had sneaked into Juet's quarters and stolen his pillow; in the ensuing melee another native tried to tip over their boat, "but," Juet wrote, "our Cooke tooke a Sword, and cut off one of his hands, and he was drowned." The next day, seven leagues south, the "Sauages" ambushed them. The sailors shot about ten of them, then took refuge in a bay that sounds as though it may have abutted Washington Heights: "Hard by it there was a Cliffe, that looked of the colour of a white greene, as though it were either Copper, or Siluer Myne: and I thinke it to be one of them, by the Trees that grow vpon it. For they be all burned, and the other places are greene as grasse, it is on that side of the Riuer that is called Manna-hata."



Times Square then and now: the area featured a red-maple swamp frequented by beavers, wood ducks, and elk.

This is Juet's sole explicit mention of the island. We can only speculate now about what impression it made. Whoever drew the night watch may have observed an ill wind shifting from northwest to east, carrying the smell of early-autumn rot, or the faltering racket of crickets and katydids. (New York has always been noisy; Peter Kalm, a Swedish botanist, visiting in 1748, noted, "Tree frogs . . . are so loud it is difficult for a man to make himself heard." Poor Kalm: he was also so disfigured by mosquito bites while here that he couldn't appear in public.) It may have seemed a menacing place; Hudson and his crew fled from it. Two days later, the Half Moon was beating back to England, and then eventually on to Holland, which had originally sent Hudson forth. In the coming years, the Dutch dispatched more ships and, in 1614, established the colony of New Netherland, with New Amsterdam, at Manhattan's southern tip, soon to be its teeming gateway and hub. The island began its accelerated transformation into a manipulated forest of asphalt and steel. Never again would it be so wild and raw, or so under-chronicled. The new inhabitants, once they got rid of the old ones, spilled far more ink than blood.

To Eric Sanderson, a landscape ecologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society, the proliferation of documentation has been of great but not limitless use. The more people there were to do the observing, the less of the natural landscape there was to observe. Sanderson is in charge of a W.C.S. project called the Human Footprint, which seeks to assess and map the human race's impact on the surface of the earth. New York, perhaps, is the ultimate case. "It's hard to think of any place in the world with as heavy a footprint, in so short a time, as New York," he said recently. "It's probably the fastest, biggest land-coverage swing in history." For nearly a decade, he has been trying to determine exactly how Manhattan would have appeared to Hudson and his men in 1609 had they disembarked and explored the place—to summon and depict the island as it was, just before it came under the shadow of that foot. He has christened this effort the Mannahatta Project. Sanderson intends to complete it in time for the quadricentennial, two years hence, of Hudson's landfall. It will include a lavish book; a Web site; an exhibit, he hopes, at the American Museum of Natural History; and, niftiest of all, a virtual re-creation—a three-dimensional computer map—in which you will be able to fly, as it were, above the island, land wherever you want, and have a look around. In place of your local cell-phone shop or O.T.B. parlor, you may see a trout stream, or a black bear browsing amid blueberry patches.

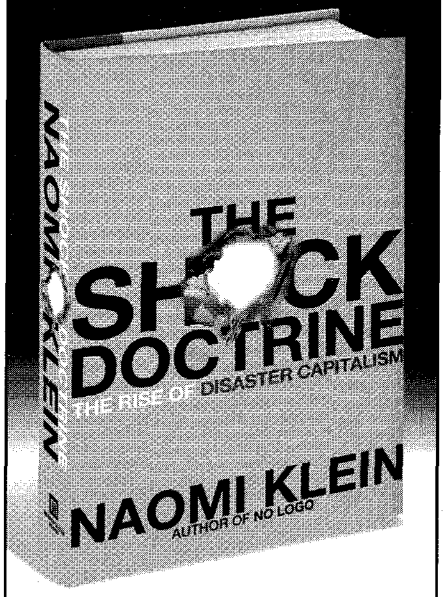
MARKLEY BOYER/WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY; MICHAEL S. YAMASHITA/IPN

The Mannahatta Project aspires to minute verisimilitude, down to the varieties of moss, and will facilitate a kind of naturalist's version of George-Washington-slept-here. Eventually, Sanderson would like to put up plaques around town calling attention to this or that bygone pond or dune, or even to post re-creations of 1609 vistas on the city's next generation of bus shelters. A visitor to Times Square, standing alongside the Naked Cowboy on the traffic island at Forty-fifth Street and Broadway, might be encouraged to see a convergence, under what is now the Marriott Marquis, of two freshwater creeks, one flowing out of a marsh beneath the headquarters of the New York *Post*, and the other from under the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School. The creeks were dammed by beavers to create a red-maple swamp, frequented by wood ducks and elk. The idea of all this, of course, is to get us to appreciate the remnants of the natural world, even in this degraded place, and then to work harder to preserve them, here and everywhere else. Still, although Sanderson might not admit it, such visions also have a way of helping us to savor our particular range of degradations. We've made a fine mess.

The citizen's urge to know his city is a strong one, and perhaps nowhere more so than in New York, where cosmopolitanism refracts into a kind of a superheated parochial self-regard. New Yorkers can hardly fathom how you could come into New York Harbor and not immediately see that this island, to borrow the writer Russell Shorto's phrase, would soon be at the center of the world. Hudson's men didn't even seem to recognize that it was an island, much less a special one. It would have been harder, certainly, for them to imag-

Information is shock resistance.

ARM YOURSELF.



"Klein has turned globalism inside out, and given all of us a new way of looking at our seemingly unending disaster in Iraq."
—Seymour M. Hersh

"Brave and terrifying.... It's nothing less than the secret history of what we call the 'free market.'"
—Arundhati Roy

"An essential book; only Klein could write it."
—Anthony Shadid

"Brilliant."
—Howard Zinn

To view *The Shock Doctrine: A Short Film*, visit www.naomiklein.org

Metropolitan Books
An imprint of Henry Holt and Company

THE BOOK THIEF

by
MARKUS ZUSAK

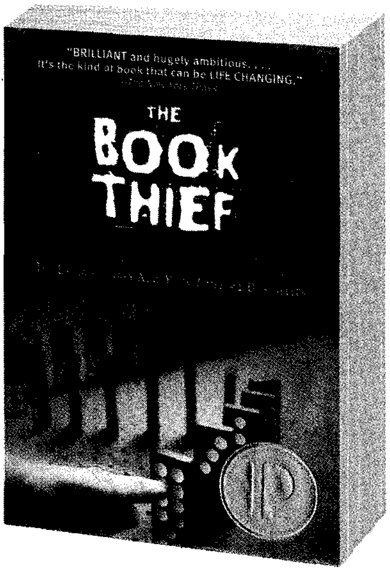
"Brilliant. . . . It's the kind of book that can be life-changing."
—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Poised to become a classic."
—*USA Today*

"A major achievement."
—*People Magazine*

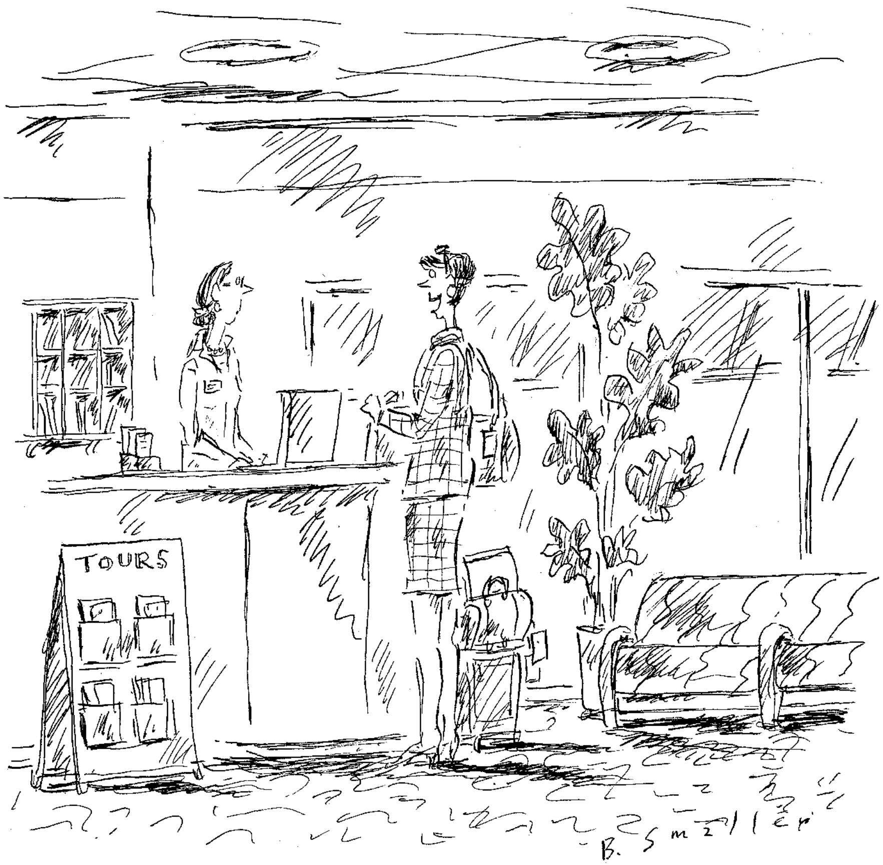
"An absorbing and searing narrative."
—*The Washington Post Book-World*

"Intricate and extraordinary."
—*Newsday*


"BRILLIANT and hugely ambitious. . . . It's the kind of book that can be LIFE CHANGING."
THE BOOK THIEF

A #1 *New York Times* Bestseller
A *USA Today* Bestseller
A 2007 Michael L. Printz Honor Book

www.markuszusak.com ALFRED A. KNOPF



"I love travel—it's so much fun to spend money in a different place."

• •

ine the place's future than it is for us to summon its past.

They must have noticed, though, that the harbor was as deep and fair as they come, and that the river at its head was a significant one. Even though the Hudson didn't lead to the Orient, it did reach deep into the heart of beaver-pelt country, and, eventually, it provided access to the Great Lakes and the territory west of the Appalachians, by way, first, of the Mohawk River, and, later, of the Erie Canal. Geography determined the city's destiny, to a certain degree. But what of its ecology? Manhattan was at the center of a web of tidal estuaries—a ripe marine environment, a major stop on the eastern flyway for migrating birds. Its temperate seasons, dense hardwood forests, ample fresh-water, great diversity of habitats—fifty-four "ecological communities" in all, according to Sanderson, from pitch-pine barrens to peatlands to eelgrass meadows—made it an unusually abundant corner of the continent. Without the city astride it, the island might still be one of the hemisphere's marvels. Manhattan was a superstar, even before its settlers made it one.

"You could do the same thing for downtown Cleveland, but it wouldn't have the same impact," Sanderson said of his project. "New York is the archetypal city, so in some ways the nature that underlies it is also archetypal."

The attempt to strip one layer from the other, and to see where they match up, seems to stimulate some as yet undiscovered cerebral nodes devoted to before-and-after visualization. The fantasy of depopulation, whether retroactive or futuristic, appeals to our sense of vanity and self-loathing. It may help explain the success of the book "The World Without Us," in which the author, Alan Weisman, describes what would happen to the earth if humans were no longer around. (In short, it would both bounce back and go to hell, in interesting ways.) It's Mannahatta in reverse. Weisman devotes a few pages to Sanderson's project, surmising that its findings will give us a clue as to what

Manhattan would become in our absence. But, of course, the Manhattan of 1609 is lost. The city is far more than a flesh wound.

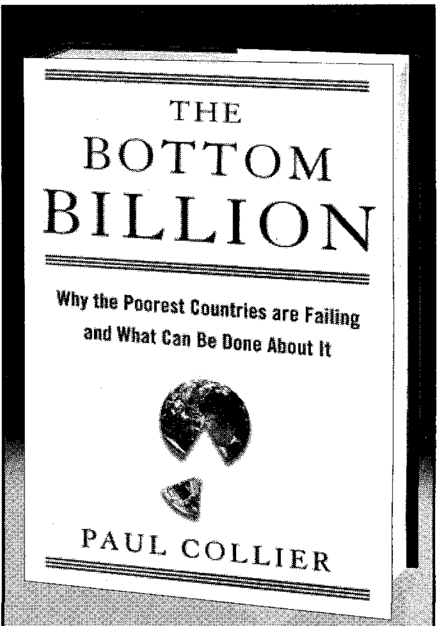
Sanderson caught his first glimpse of prelapsarian Manhattan in a map that had been prepared by the British during the Revolutionary War. It is called the British Headquarters Map, and it depicts, in meticulous detail, at a scale of six and a half inches to a mile, the island's contours and topographical features, its streams and swamps, so as to aid the British in defending it against General Washington's Continental Army. The map emphasizes marchability. In 1782, when the map was likely completed, most of the island's pre-Hudson topography and hydrology, if not its ecology (the Dutch and English had already introduced dozens of species, and chased away a few, too), was largely intact—although the map does not show, for example, that the British, cut off from the rest of the continent during the war, had chopped down all the trees. ("The island is totally stripped," George Washington observed in 1781.) After the Revolution, and especially after the adoption of the grid system, in 1811, the island's surface, and even its innards, were irrevocably altered.

The grid ran roughshod over the landscape. In 1808, John Randel was dispatched to survey the entire island, for the purpose of laying out the grid. A decade later, he began a series of ninety-two maps, called the Farm Maps—meticulous closeups, with an elevation reading for the northwest corner of every intersection on the new grid. Sanderson pieced these together and also found Randel's notebooks at the New-York Historical Society, which contained even more detail. Then Sanderson, along with some colleagues, went out into the field with an altimeter and a G.P.S. locator and squared Randel's findings with their own and with the British Headquarters Map. Finally, they created a new contour map, drawn by hand—a template for the restoration of 1609.

Sanderson's map depicts a more slender and sundered Manhattan than the one we know. The coast is notched with coves, streams, and tidal marshes. There are stretches of sandy beach, including a four-mile strand from the Battery to West Thirty-third Street. Over the centuries, the island has fattened up. The Dutch started it by dumping their refuse into the coves and wetlands and bays. By 1782, the shoreline had already expanded two blocks east (Pearl Street to Water, Water to Front), thanks to a steady diet of excavated earth, garbage, and sewage. Since then, the shoreline has been straightened and filled, and girdled by highways; it seems weird even to use the word "shore." The old coast would have cut Ground Zero in half. (The terrestrial half would have consisted of thirty-foot hills, rising quickly from the shore, dense with oak and chestnut trees—so cry not for Radio Row.) Many of the city's hills, especially those on the southern half of the island, have been levelled, and its dells and creeks have been filled. Murray Hill, for example, used to be a prominent ridge, running from present-day Forty-sixth Street and Sixth Avenue southeast to its high point on East Thirty-seventh. Approaching it from the north, you would have seen a steep hemlock forest. Now you hardly notice any incline at all, heading downtown on Fifth Avenue, unless you are on Rollerblades, skating into the wind.

One day, I went to visit Sanderson in the W.C.S. offices, which occupy a cluster of trailers in a parking lot at the Bronx Zoo. He greeted me in bare feet: a morning of torrential rain had caught him mid-commute, from his home on City Island, and soaked him to the knees. His trailer was a paradise of field guides and cool maps. Sanderson is forty, with a gentle manner and a soft voice but the intense eyes of a functional obsessive. He grew up in (and on) Walnut Creek, California—the East Bay. He recalls that his driveway was always full of frogs. In the early seventies, Sanderson remembers, the Army Corps of Engineers converted the creek into a concrete ditch. The frogs disappeared. Once, when he was a Boy Scout, a counsellor told him to sit next to the Stanislaus River for three hours without moving. "I thought I was done after fifteen minutes," he said. "After thirty minutes, I was totally bored. And then things got interesting. I began to notice things."

Nine years ago, he moved to New


THE
BOTTOM
BILLION
Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It
PAUL COLLIER

"The best nonfiction book so far this year."
—Nicholas D. Kristof, The New York Times

"This slip of a book is set to become a classic."
—The Economist

"Read this book. You will learn much you do not know. It will also change the way you look at the tragedy of persistent poverty in a world of plenty."
—Financial Times

"A path-breaking work providing penetrating insights into the largely unexplored borderland between economics and politics." —George Soros

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS | www.oup.com/us
Available at bookstores everywhere

York, to work for the W.C.S.—a hard-luck deployment for a nature boy. The city has, somewhat ironically, long been a major nexus for naturalists, both amateur and professional, who, congregating here out of institutional or commercial necessity, sought an outlet for their Linnaean inclinations. The ratio of field notes to actual field may be higher in New York than anywhere else. Sanderson, anyway, began to notice things.

Sanderson has devised a systematic way of recording and representing an ecosystem. He calls it the Muir web, after John Muir, the pioneering American naturalist. In the Muir web, each species of plant or animal, and each characteristic of habitat, has a full set of needs and associations, which, taken together, form a tangle of connection and dependency. If you have a particular bird, it means that you'll have a particular tree bark, or nut, or bug, and so on. To evoke 1609 Manhattan, he throws out the non-native species—such as the cardinal, which didn't expand its range this far north until the twentieth century—and adds those he can fairly presume were here. He must catalogue the conditions under which, say, white pines exist—shallow, sandy, sterile soil—and make an educated guess as to where they may have been. He said, “I may be going out on a limb, but at least I'm trying to document whose limb I'm out on.” By the time he's done, he expects to have four thousand elements in his Muir web. He then plugs them all into his customized modelling software, which places them on the map, as nature, or a creator, might have. The software mimics that of social-networking sites. His son, who is six years old, once asked him to explain it, and he said, “This program writes programs that tell the mapping program to make the maps that predict where all the species were.”

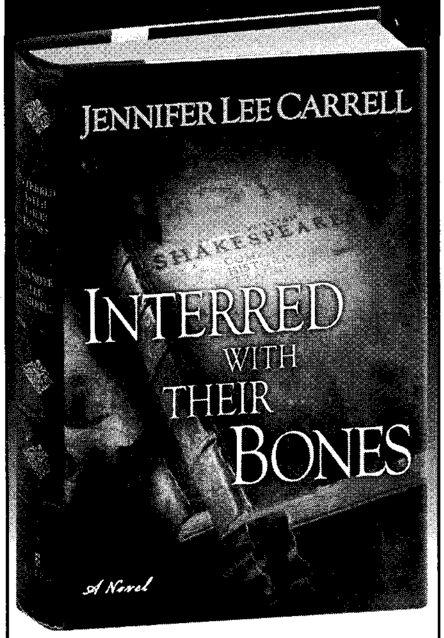
Eighty per cent of the work is building the data sets. The glory part is turning that data into 3-D pictures. This is the bailiwick of Markley Boyer, a digital-photography entrepreneur who heard about the Mannahatta Project while working with the W.C.S. in Gabon, and volunteered to help. For example, using line drawings from books, and photographs of bark, seeds, and leaves, Boyer creates computer images of trees—several varieties of each species. “Then the software will start placing trees semi-intelligently,” Sanderson said. He is predicting accuracy down to one block.

For every element of the Mannahatta project, Sanderson has consulted dozens of sources: “Catalogue of Plants Growing Spontaneously within Thirty Miles of the City of New York” (1817); “The Moss Flora of New York City and Vicinity” (1916); various soil guides, which describe much of the city's soil as “coarse anthropogenic material,” also known as garbage. As far as phantom water is concerned, a favorite is James Reuel Smith's “Springs and Wells of Manhattan and the Bronx, New York City,” which Smith researched, beginning in 1897, by riding a bicycle around town and taking photographs of springs and wells (an approach unavailable to him in the preparation of his “Springs and Wells in Greek and Roman Literature”). So far, the only funding Sanderson has received is thirty-five thousand dollars from the Hudson River Estuary Program, which is underwritten by New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, plus the book deal, which is from Harry N. Abrams. The president of the W.C.S., Steven Sanderson (no relation), has allowed him to devote a great portion of his time to Mannahatta. Steven Sanderson told me recently, with a note of admiration, if not quite impatience, “It will be wonderful, finally, to get all of this squeezed out of Eric's head into some available format.”

“Show him your ephemeral creeks,” Sanderson said to Amanda Huron, a City University graduate student, who was busy modelling tidal levels on a computer. As Sanderson and Boyer looked on, she pulled up a representation of the Collect Pond, the site of a Lenape settlement, and later of Five Points, an infamous slum, and now of Foley Square, home to several government buildings. The pond supplied the city with drinking water into the nineteenth century, until it was polluted by tanneries and slaughterhouses; it was then filled with dirt and garbage that settled and moldered and stank—which is one reason that the neighborhood built over it was a slum. Huron's diagram showed

The NAME of the ROSE
The HISTORIAN
The DA VINCI CODE

BOOKSELLERS AGREE:
THE NEXT GREAT
LITERARY ADVENTURE
IS HERE.



One woman is about to
unearth a long-lost play by
William Shakespeare—a discovery
that could lead to both untold
fortune and unspeakable crimes.

“Plot twists worthy of
The Da Vinci Code.... This spirited
and action-packed novel delivers
constant excitement.”
—*Publishers Weekly*

www.jenniferleecarrell.com

DUTTON
A member of
penguin group (USA) inc.
www.penguin.com

that a pair of streams pouring out of the Collect Pond, one heading east and the other west, joined tidal creeks that meandered, in turn, into the East and Hudson Rivers. At high tide, Sanderson thinks, the Lenape could paddle a canoe from one side of the island to the other. "It's like the L train," Boyer said.

According to the 1782 map, Manhattan had more than seventy miles of streams and at least twenty-one ponds. The longest stream was the Saw Kill; it flowed from present-day Central Park to what is now the Seventy-first Street exit off the F.D.R. Drive. The Great Kill went from Times Square to the Hudson, near the entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel. The soggy ground of the Lispenard Meadows, under what is now SoHo and the northern part of Tribeca, is responsible for the dearth of skyscrapers in that part of the city and the dip in the skyline between downtown and midtown. (It's no obstacle to today's engineers, who can reach the bedrock deep below the muck. Witness, if you must, the forty-six-story Trump SoHo hotel rising above Spring Street.) There was a pebbly brook on Maiden Lane, where the Dutch girls would do their washing. There are still stories of streams running through the kitchens of fancy restaurants or the basements of schools. Best known, perhaps, is Minetta Brook, a creek whose burbling waters supposedly surface, after storms, in the lobby of an apartment building on lower Fifth Avenue, into a bonglike contraption of clear tubing.

At Astor Place, a series of sand hills—*zandbergen*—supported pitch-pine and scrub-oak barrens, like those you see in southern New Jersey or eastern Long Island. The Upper West Side was a plateau of upland forest and meadow, abloom with asters (not Astors), cardinal flowers, monkey flowers, red columbine, and black snakeroot. For this reason, the Dutch called it Bloemendael, which became Bloomingdale, a name that stuck until the mid-nineteenth century. Broadway, parts of which were formerly Bloomingdale Road, had followed the course of an old Lenape trail up the spine of the island. The Lenape had likely followed the game; Broadway belonged to cougar and deer.

One day this summer, I met Sanderson and Boyer at the entrance to Inwood Hill Park, on Isham and Seaman Streets, near the northern tip of Manhattan, where the woods are as near as anything in town to an original state. (The term "original" is tricky, since twenty thousand years ago the island lay under a thirty-stories-deep sheet of ice.) Boyer said, "This is one of the few parts of Manhattan where you can get around successfully with a 1782 map." The idea was to start our field trip as far back in time as possible. The further uptown you go, the more traces you'll find of 1609, as if a multigenerational campaign to obliterate them lost steam as it advanced north. For this reason, Inwood is Sanderson's favorite part of Manhattan.

We walked along a glass-strewn

NEW
Rosetta Stone® Version 3

He was a hardworking farm boy.

She was an Italian supermodel.

He knew he would have just one chance to impress her.

Rosetta Stone.® The fastest and easiest way to learn ITALIAN.

NEW Proprietary speech recognition technology gets you speaking from the start and NEW speech analysis tools perfect your pronunciation.

NEW Contextual Formation™ feature uses real-world simulations to give you the benefits you need to succeed.

NEW Adaptive Recall™ Language feature tracks progress to reinforce your strengths and revisit needs.

NEW Milestone feature lets you try out your new language knowledge in real-life simulations.

IMPROVED Intuitive, sequential learning makes every lesson count and build progressively.

Introducing Rosetta Stone® Version 3!

The world's leading language-learning software just got better.

Personal Edition.
Solutions for organizations also available.

Act now to receive a
10% discount.
Offer expires Jan. 31, 2008.

Level 1	~~$209~~	NOW	$188.10
Level 1&2	~~$339~~	NOW	$305.10
Best Value! Level 1,2&3	~~$499~~	NOW	$449.10

Available for 30 languages, including Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese and English.

The fastest way to learn a language. Guaranteed.™

(800) 788-5141
Use promotional code nys107 when ordering

RosettaStone.com/nys107

RosettaStone®

Dine in the splendour of times gone by.

Onboard QUEEN MARY 2® dining continues to be the event it was in the Golden Era. An occasion to dress in your finest and share the legacy with new-found friends. This evening begins with your grande descente into the stunning three-deck Britannia® Restaurant where sommeliers pour wine selected from the most extensive wine cellar afloat. Tomorrow, choices abound. Whether you dine at Todd English on creations from Boston's renowned chef or simply enjoy a lunch of traditional British fare at the Golden Lion Pub, your voyage will be filled with one culinary adventure after the other.

Ship's registry: Great Britain. ©2007 Cunard

Begin your incredible adventure by requesting a free brochure. Call 1-866-5-CUNARD or visit cunard.com

QUEEN MARY 2

CUNARD®

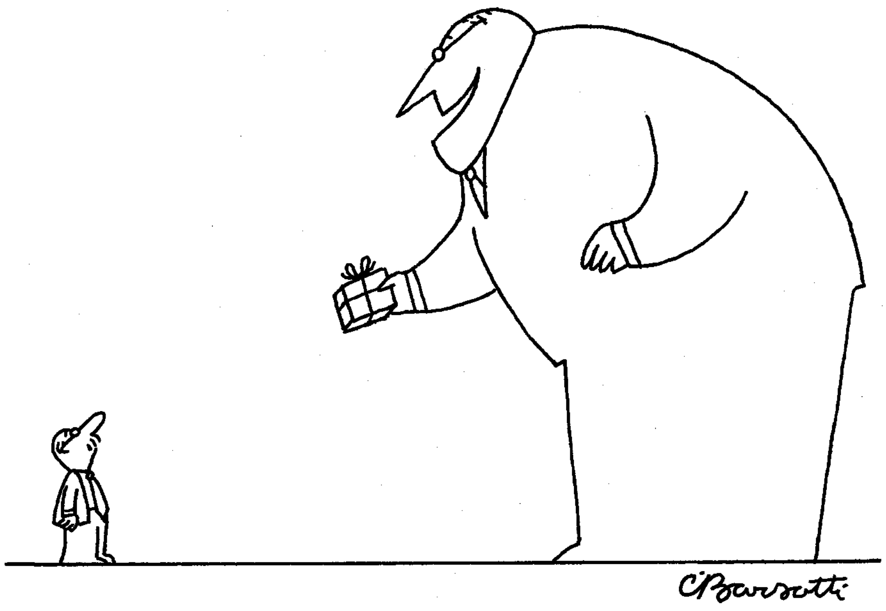
THE MOST FAMOUS OCEAN LINERS IN THE WORLD℠

stretch of uncut grass between some handball courts and a row of tenements trawling denim-strewn laundry lines. Well-trod paths cut through an adjoining thicket. Boyer said, "One thing we've found is that the places we like to go are places where gay cruisers like to go." Sanderson was wearing a panama hat and navy-colored bushwhacking clothes. Boyer, lean and bright-eyed, had on black jeans and a white shirt. They had a G.P.S. and an enlarged printout of a portion of the British Headquarters Map, on which they'd superimposed the street grid—an oddly thrilling document, as endlessly scrutinizable as the cover of "Led Zeppelin IV."

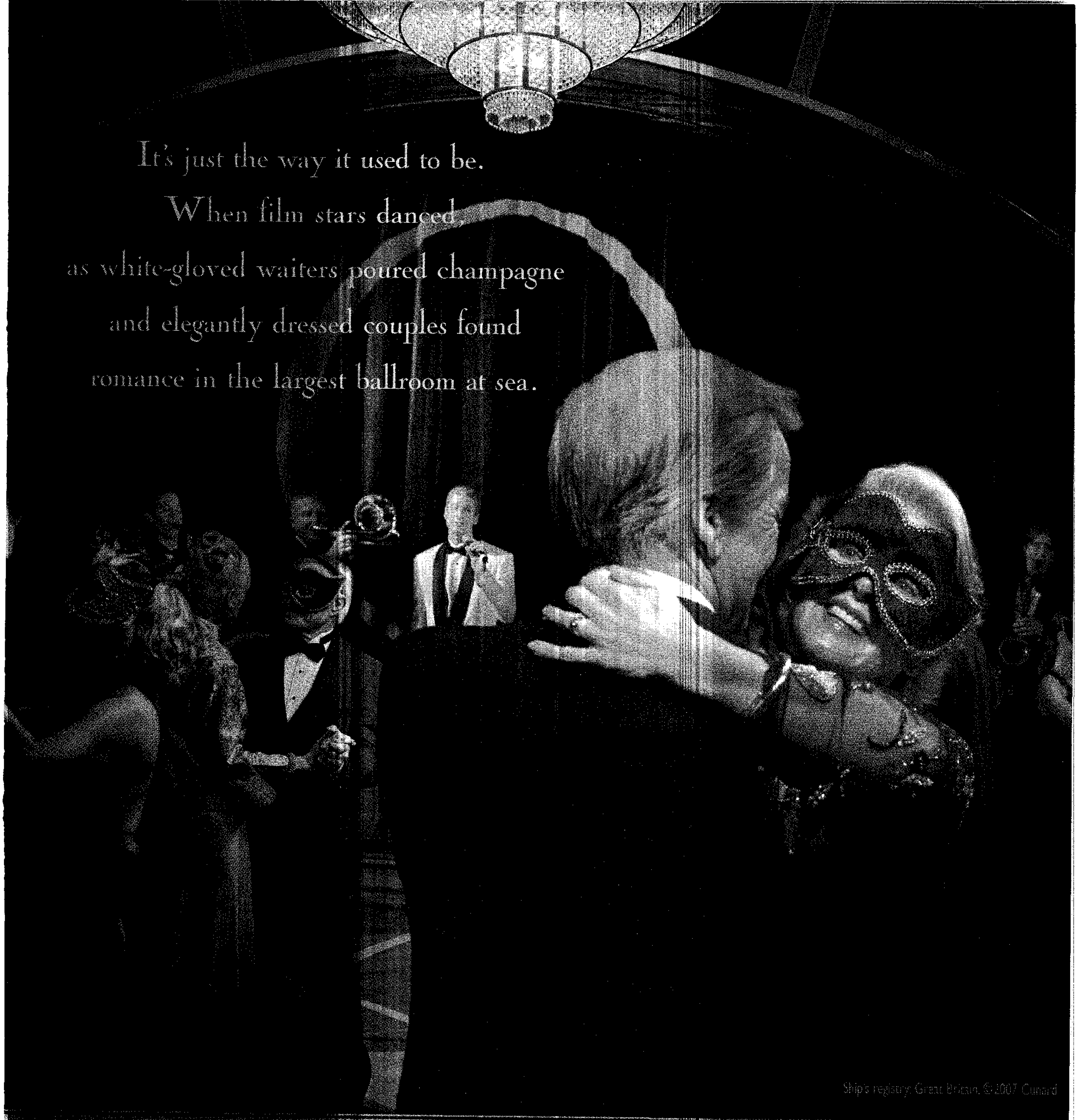
Sanderson's hybrid map indicated that there had been a creek a few blocks south. We hopped down off the grass onto a sidewalk, and then over an old stone wall and into the woods. There were wild raspberries, and empty Bacardi bottles, and a sign saying, "Do Not Feed Pigeons." We came into a slight clearing and an almost imperceptible depression in the earth, which Boyer and Sanderson thought could be a sign of the stream. From the phantom creek bed, we headed north along a path of crumbling asphalt, which seemed to follow the course of an old road on the map. Up here, there were giant, healthy oaks. "We think that this is more or less what it looked like," Boyer said. A parks-department employee sped by in a golf cart; we passed a leopard-skin umbrella and a guy (my guess was Senegalese) in a Che Guevara T-shirt talking on his cell phone. From a promontory, we followed the path down into a gulch and the oaks gave way to immense tulip poplars, many of them as old as the British Headquarters Map. "There were Lenape living in here," Sanderson said. He pointed to some caves on a talus slope, which were largely sealed off about seventy years ago. "The ridge gave them protection against the prevailing winter winds," he said. We came out of the woods at the spot where, as a plaque explained, Peter Minuit supposedly bought Manhattan from the Lenape for trinkets worth sixty guilders. Acres of landfill now separated it from the waters of Spuyten Duyvil. A pair of tourists were standing there, trying to make sense of their map. They looked at ours and said, "You guys have a good map."

"Ours is a little old," Boyer said.

We made our way back to where Boyer had parked his Subaru, which had a Segway in the back. We took Dyckman Street to the Harlem River Drive and drove down to East 106th Street, where another F.D.R. exit follows the course of a vanished tidal creek. This one, called Pension's Creek, ran west from the East River all the way past Fifth Avenue to the current shore of the Harlem Meer, in Central Park, before turning north. The island had



"Your hopes and dreams—we saved them for you."


It's just the way it used to be.
When film stars danced,
as white-gloved waiters poured champagne
and elegantly dressed couples found
romance in the largest ballroom at sea.
Ship's registry: Great Britain. © 2007 Cunard

A MOST CIVILIZED ADVENTURE.℠

Six exhilarating days to experience the best of British tradition in contemporary style.
From formal Royal Night galas in the Queens Room to lavish musical productions in the Royal Court Theatre,
there is nothing quite as magnificent as a Transatlantic Crossing on the grandest ship at sea.

For reservations or further information call your Travel Professional or 1-800-7-CUNARD or visit cunard.com

QUEEN MARY 2
CUNARD®
THE MOST FAMOUS OCEAN LINERS IN THE WORLD℠

been nearly bisected here by water. Harlem was, first and foremost, defined by this creek. (It is odd, in this sense, that Ninety-sixth Street, and not 106th, became the de-facto boundary between East Harlem and the Upper East Side.) The Dutch called the south bank Otterspoor, owing to a preponderance of river otters. On the British Headquarters Map, a thin strip of dry land between Pension's Creek and a rocky hill, in what is now the Park, was called McGowan's Pass, in honor of the family that owned a nearby tavern. It's the Karbala Gap of the Upper East Side. Washington shot through the pass prior to the Battle of Harlem, and during the War of 1812 the locals built a fort there as a defense against the British, who had attacked Connecticut.

Nowadays, McGowan's Pass is defended by Knish Nosh, a snack bar next to the Conservatory Garden. On the day we visited, it was manned by a young Russian who claimed to have pumpkin bagels (he meant muffins). The patrons, that morning, consisted of a group of summer campers engaged in a scavenger hunt, and a fleet of hospital patients in wheelchairs, attended by a few nurses. A man drifted by on a bicycle, with "Brick House" playing from a boom box. As tempting as it was to rue the absence of otters, egrets, and acres upon acres of spartina grass waving in the breeze, there was something beguiling about this assemblage in the Park on a summer weekday morning.

We climbed up onto the hill over the pass, and looked north and east out over the barrio. In place of the brownstones and bodegas, there would have been a vast grassy plain. There would have been heath hen, now extinct. The ground was flatter than in most of Manhattan, because the rock there is marble (called Inwood marble), rather than the schist that undergirds, and occasionally juts out of, the soil in most of Manhattan; it is softer, and so it had been ground down by the ice during the last ice age. The Lenape had probably burned the plain every ten years or so, to keep it clear, for better farming and hunting.

As for the Harlem Meer, directly below us, it is, like most of the waterways of Central Park, man-made. "I was talking to a palynologist," Sanderson said. "I was thinking that maybe we could get some salt-marsh core samples from beneath the Meer. But it turns out it's lined with cement."

Later, we drove down Fifth Avenue, along the edge of what used to be hilly, boggy wilderness, the intransigence of which helped preserve it long enough for it to be viable as a park (although it gave the Park's landscapers fits). Likewise, the other parks, to the north—such as Morningside, Fort Tryon, and Mount Morris—are on land too steep and rocky to be easily developed. We emerged into the blinding mayhem of midtown, parked in a garage on West Forty-eighth Street, and walked down a block to the Diamond District, into what was once a pond-pocked hemlock forest. Five blocks to our south, on the ridge of Murray Hill, there had been stands of white pine, ten to fifteen stories tall—which, ideal for ships' masts, were doomed, well before any Coliseum Books could sprout up, and then close, in their place. Looking down Sixth Avenue, Sanderson gestured toward the herds of pedestrians stretching away from us and said, "You see all those heads, and you think that the six hundred Lenape who used to live on Manhattan could have fit on that one block."

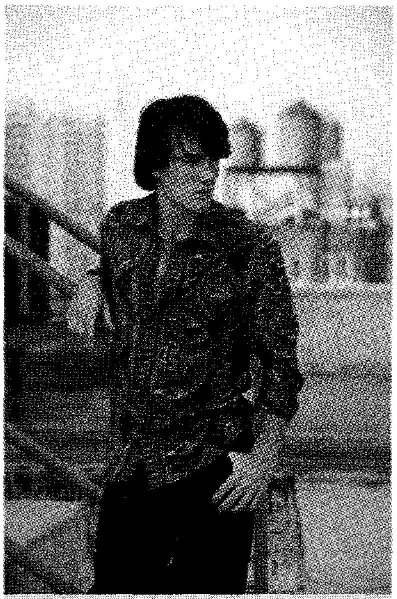
We stood on the north side of Forty-seventh, looking across the street at the row of jewelry shops—the Futurama Diamond Exchange—and tried to picture a cool, shady forest. The citizens of the world streamed past, intent on making deals. A Chinese-restaurant deliveryman asked us to move so that he could unlock his bike. Boyer had his G.P.S. out. We were searching for the site of an ancient pond, which they had seen on the 1782 map. Gradually, we closed in on it. "Right here," Boyer said. The pond's shore stretched from David S. Diamonds to the National Jewelry Exchange. It occurred to me that the stall where I'd purchased an engagement ring ten years earlier was right on top of it. We decided to stop by. The dealer, recognizing me, said, "What are *you* doing here?" We tried to explain. He said that he knew nothing about any pond and then gave us a look suggesting we'd better just move along. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
More images from the Mannahatta Project.

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.



"DETAILED"

Just arrived at Dillard's, this brand-new collection of true American-inspired sportswear offers a blend of modern style and must-have details interpreted in luxe casual clothing that looks great anytime. Especially notable are the woven shirts for their innovative fabrics and custom detailing that add interest and style to a weekend staple. The entire collection is wash and wear for the ultimate in everyday ease. If you're looking to add a little fashion to your fall wardrobe, you can check out "Detailed" exclusively at select Dillard's stores; call 1-800-345-5273 for stores.

Dillard's
The Style of Your Life.

SHOUTS & MURMURS

PROCLIVITIES

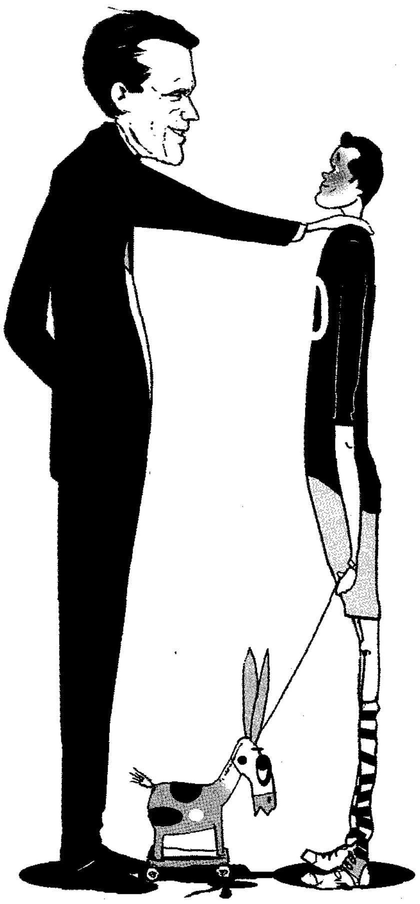
BY JEFFREY FRANK

> Mr. Romney's eldest son, Tagg, 37, says that back in the early 1990s, he told his father privately that he was thinking about becoming a Democrat. His father sat him down to dissuade him, taking him through the differences between Republicans and Democrats.
>
> —*The Times.*

You can probably imagine what went through Mitt Romney's mind at the moment his tormented son revealed this impulse. No doubt he would have tried to learn all that he could about the phenomenon. He would have talked to other parents who had had similar experiences—who had entertained suspicions that one of their children might have Democratic tendencies. That might have helped. Nevertheless, the conversation between father and son would most likely have been personal and painful. Mitt certainly would have explained to Tagg how a party affiliation can define you. He might even have touched upon science, and explained that we are all made up of millions of invisible doodads that make us human and also are responsible for that stem-cell thing—and for how we choose our leaders. Then he would have told Tagg that a party tie is not something that one is born with. Rather, belonging to a party is a matter of choice—a choice that people make when they are mature adults and are no longer guided by the whims of the little people we call children or the frantic people we call adolescents.

Of course, Mitt must also have said that he would respect whatever commitment Tagg made, because he loved him—that nothing his son did to affiliate himself with a political party consisting almost entirely of avowed Democrats would ever change that. But he would have reminded Tagg, yet again, that we do have free will and that a person's political orientation is a result of the decisions he or she makes. That is undoubtedly why Mitt Romney is a Republican and why almost everyone he knows is a Republican.

Perhaps Mitt also told Tagg that one should practice tolerance. After all, he might have said, Ronald Reagan was once a Democrat and Norman Podhoretz was once a Democrat, too, and people like Reagan and Podhoretz might not have made their choices if they'd been victims of anti-Democratic prejudice. Yet they did reveal their preferences—what must have seemed to them difficult adjustments. Mitt might have added that many of his own friends—apparently staunch Republican friends—may indeed have Democratic inclinations and predilections that they manage to keep in check despite nagging urges and the seductive rhetoric of Democrats like John Edwards, who seem to enjoy talking about people who have no health care because they weren't born in France.

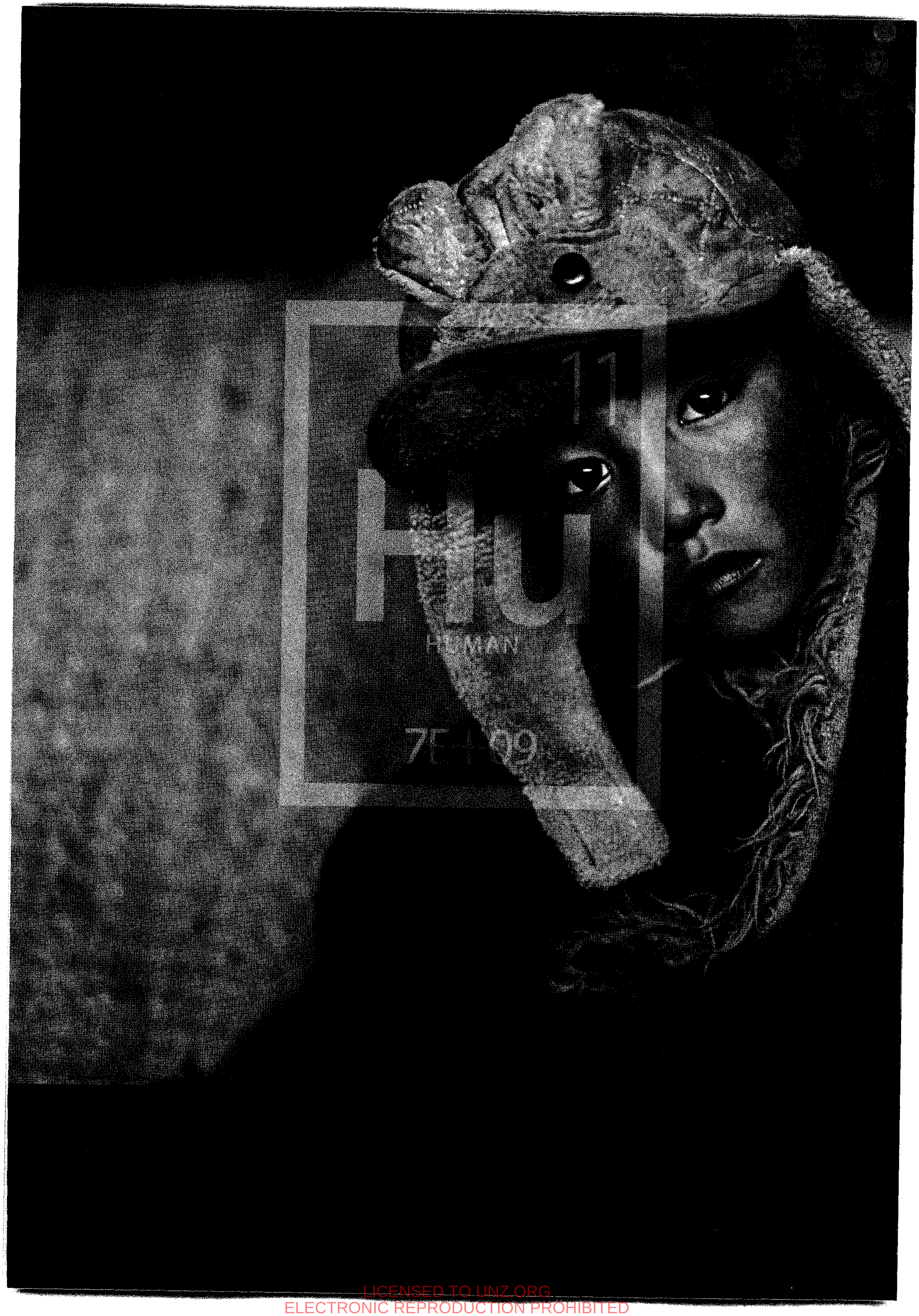


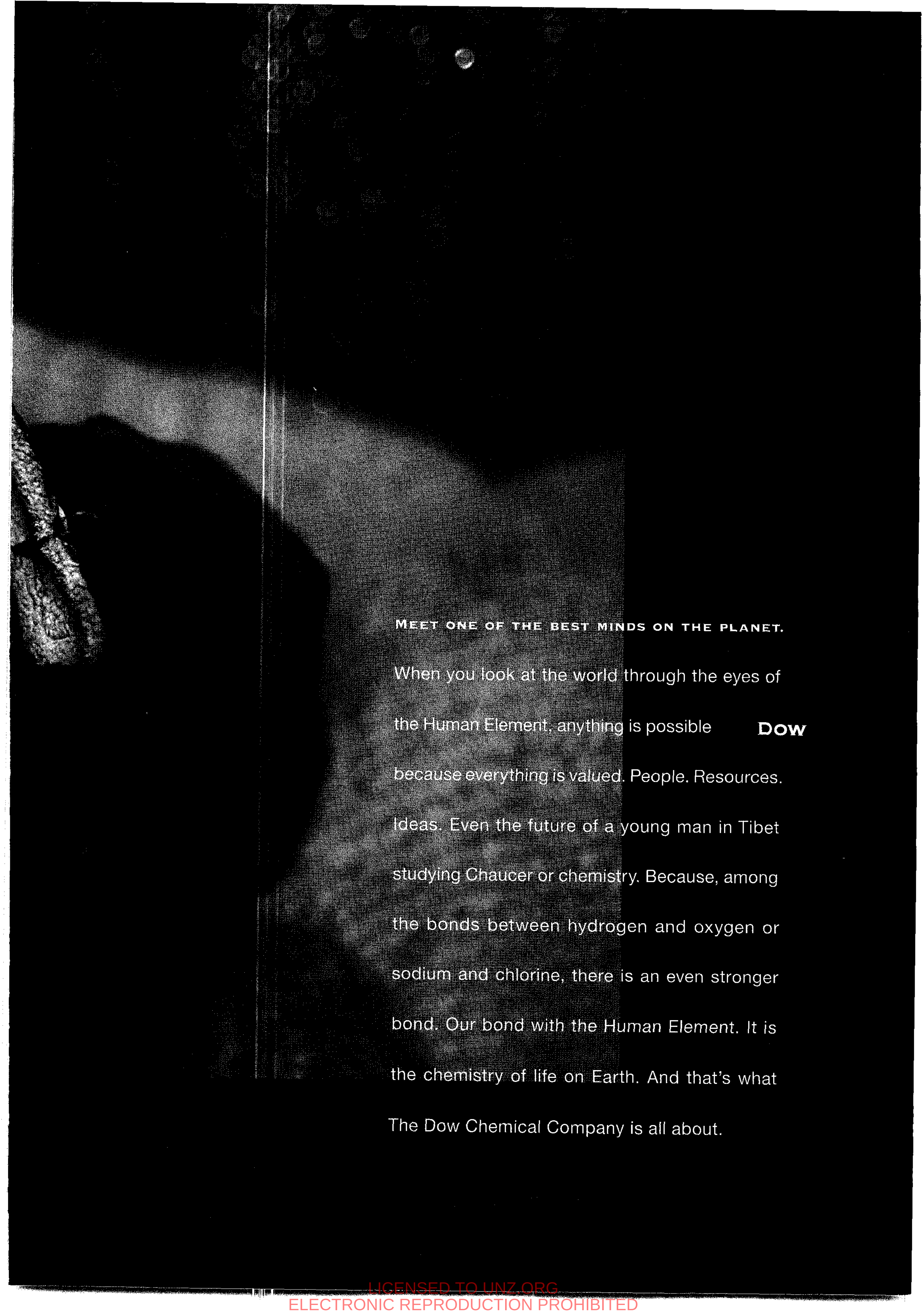
ISTVAN BANYAI

But, when Mitt and Tagg finally sat down to talk honestly about Tagg's problem, Mitt would have had to point out what those who take a different life path discover: that when you choose to be a Democrat you are also deciding to adopt a different life style, one that will lead to your becoming Democratic in your outlook. The next step—the unavoidable step—is that you begin to spend more time with Democrats, sometimes on an intimate basis, and eventually you end up raising your children in a household of Democrats. *It is not just about you, Tagg,* he surely said.

Of course, Mitt would also tell Tagg that we are all God's children and that one should not hate Democrats—hate the party, not the party member. He would explain that he is personally offended by the way Democrats live their lives and by their perverse fondness for taxes, but he doesn't oppose their right to live any way they wish. He would emphasize, however, the unhappy truth—as Tagg will learn—which is that Democrats aren't like ordinary Americans. That knowledge gives Mitt Romney an inner strength. He knows that, if his words alone don't suffice, there are support groups out there for people who find themselves helplessly sliding from one party to another.

Growing up is not as easy as it looks, and arriving at the right values is a long and sometimes perplexing journey. Mitt would try to understand. Did Tagg find that at an early age he was attracted to Democrats and perhaps even repelled by Republicans? It is to Mitt Romney's credit that he responded to his son with forbearance and sensitivity, knowing that many young people—Tagg Romney, it seems, among them—are deeply confused about their political identities. Who am I? they ask themselves. *What* am I? It is comforting to think that fathers like Mitt Romney are prepared to address the doubts and embarrassments of children who experiment ideologically and who need nothing more than a firm hand and wise counsel to return them to an upright path, where they will surely remain for as long as they are able to vote. ♦


11
Hu
HUMAN
7E+09



MEET ONE OF THE BEST MINDS ON THE PLANET.

When you look at the world through the eyes of the Human Element, anything is possible because everything is valued. People. Resources. Ideas. Even the future of a young man in Tibet studying Chaucer or chemistry. Because, among the bonds between hydrogen and oxygen or sodium and chlorine, there is an even stronger bond. Our bond with the Human Element. It is the chemistry of life on Earth. And that's what The Dow Chemical Company is all about.

DOW

LIFE AND LETTERS

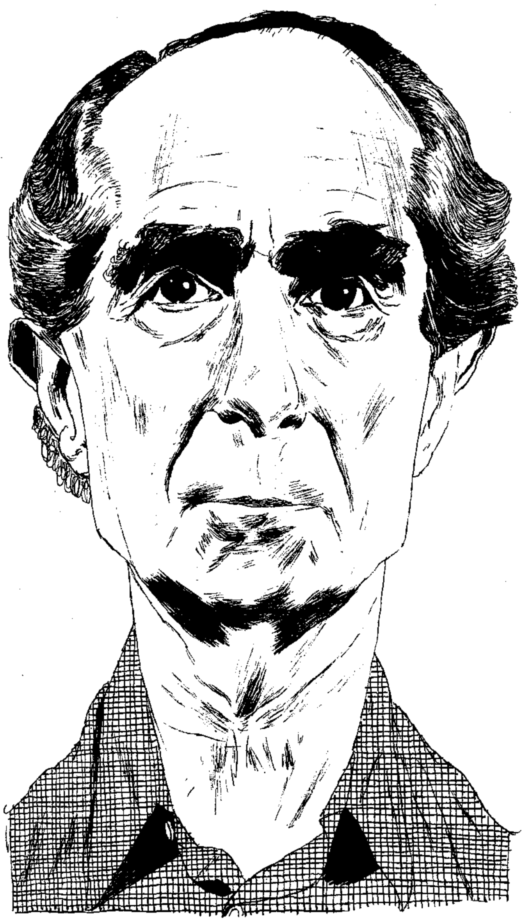
AGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Hermione Lee talks with Philip Roth about his new novel, "Exit Ghost."

Hermione Lee: As the book's title, taken from a stage direction in "Macbeth," tells us, this is a book of haunting. The novelist Nathan Zuckerman haunts his old city like a revenant, and is haunted by ghosts of the past—the ghostly warning voice of his onetime inspiration, the writer E. I. Lonoff; the haunting figure of Amy Bellette, the consort of Lonoff's last years, once strange and beautiful and young, now old and sick and poor. Zuckerman is haunted by the erotic counterlife with thirty-year-old Jamie Logan, never to be fulfilled, except on the page. And the book itself is haunted by "The Ghost Writer." What is the appeal, the force, the inspiration of ghosts and haunting?

Philip Roth: People go in search of ghosts whenever they return, after a long absence, to a place where they once lived. Who of us has returned to a childhood home or a city that may have figured prominently in his biography without knowing full well that seeing it again was bound to be an experience at once exciting and sad? "Haunted by the past" is a commonplace phrase because it's a commonplace experience. Even if one is not, strictly speaking, "haunted," the past is perpetually with one in the present, and the longer it grows and the further it recedes the stronger its presence seems to become. I agree with the Chekhov character who, when, in a crisis, he is reminded that "this, too, shall pass," responds, "Nothing passes."

In listing the sources of Zuckerman's haunting, you omit the most haunting ghost of all: the younger man he once was and no longer is. He returns to New York to have a medical procedure that half promises to enable him to recover something of the continence that he lost through the ravages of prostate cancer and a prostatectomy. And, when he is drawn to young Jamie Logan, he is haunted by the loss of sexual potency, another severe consequence of the cancer surgery. So long as Zuckerman was living in rural solitude in a two-room cabin atop a New England mountain where he devoted himself exclusively to his writing, he managed to contain the pain of these losses. What is reawakened by the possibilities provided by the return to New York is a longing so strong that it comes to border on the delusion that he can recover what is irrevocably gone, and gone not only because of the consequences of the surgery but because of his decision, eleven years earlier, to withdraw to the New England mountaintop—and also, of course, because of the effects of aging and the ever-quickening passage of time.



ANDY FRIEDMAN

H.L.: One of Zuckerman's most enraging encounters on his return to the city is with Richard Kliman, the would-be biographer of E. I. Lonoff, a stop-at-nothing, energetic, shameless young literary predator. Why does Zuckerman so resist the biographer's project to reveal the late Lonoff's secret history? What is the source of Zuckerman's animus against biography?

P.R.: Perhaps the question to answer first is, What is the source of his animus against Kliman? And that source is obvious in the very characterization of Kliman that you offer. The clash between the two is inevitable, given Zuckerman's appraisal of Kliman's character, methods, and goals. But the terms of the clash, the vehemence of the clash, the outcome of the clash are something else, and they are at the heart of the drama of the book. The antagonism between the two, how each responds to it, how each enacts it, is of no less interest than the antagonism's source—indeed, the nature of the clash is what interests Zuckerman most, since it reveals to him yet another instance of his powerlessness and ineffectiveness as a man. That Zuckerman should be defeated by Kliman and unable to stop him is a discovery whose pain is hardly mitigated—whose pain is enhanced—by the fact that twenty-eight-year-old Kliman, visibly at the pinnacle of his powers as a virile young man, is ascertained by Zuckerman to be the adulterous lover of Jamie Logan, the desirable young woman unattainable to the writer.

As for the novelist's animus against biography—there is none. The animus is against the kind of biography Zuckerman believes Kliman to be writing, and his assessment is grounded in what he judges to be the highly dubious evidence that Kliman presents of Lonoff's "secret history." It would be as wrongheaded to read into the presentation of

Kliman an attack on the genre of biography as to read, say, my presentation of Portnoy as an attack on the practice of masturbation. I count myself a friend of both.

H.L.: Why has Nathan Zuckerman gone into solitary confinement on his mountain since 9/11, and why does he find the life of the city, on his return, so alien to him? It's not just about fear of terrorism or dislike of cell phones—it's a profound estrangement from urban culture, from the politics and society of contemporary American life. Yet you are a writer whose characters have often been up to their necks in the thick, messy complications of "the real," of life as it is lived. What prompts this movement toward (and, at the end of the book, back into) solitary estrangement?

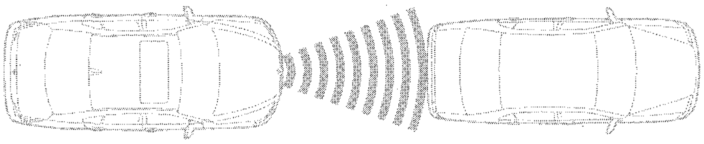
P.R.: It's a bit of an exaggeration to say that he goes into "solitary confinement"; he's gone off to live and write in a comfortable rural retreat three hours by car from Boston (to the east) and New York (to the south), with all of an unspoiled New England mountaintop as his playground, a college town with a good library just eight miles away, and the Tanglewood Festival, which he regularly attends to hear music, just a few miles beyond that. And his move to his rural retreat takes place eight full years before 9/11—it's only since 9/11 that he has cut himself off from the newspapers and the news, so as to exist wholly apart from the turmoil of current events. The novel makes clear that he left New York originally because of a series of bizarre but (according to the F.B.I., to whom he turns for help) serious death threats, seemingly prompted by someone's hatred of his fiction. Two years after his departure, he develops prostate cancer, and the operation leaves him in a condition hardly designed to encourage him to reënter society. As time goes by, he finds enormous satisfaction in living as his own master and at the beck and call of only his work. His solitary way of living becomes a not unpleasant habit that satisfies his desire for a quiet, contemplative life devoted to literature. His estrangement from urban culture is almost inevitably the result of the strong affinity, developed over more than a decade, for the routine pleasures of this rural seclusion. You speak of characters of mine who "have often been up to

BMW 2007
Active Cruise Control

bmwusa.com
1-800-334-4BMW

The Ultimate Driving Machine

Other cars don't even come close.



Our advanced Active Cruise Control system uses radar sensors to automatically maintain a preset distance between your BMW and the vehicle in front of you in highway driving. It's another forward-thinking idea from BMW. Learn more at bmwusa.com/ideas.

©2007 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name, model names and logo are registered trademarks.

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

THE NEW YORKER
Festival
October 5|6|7
New York City

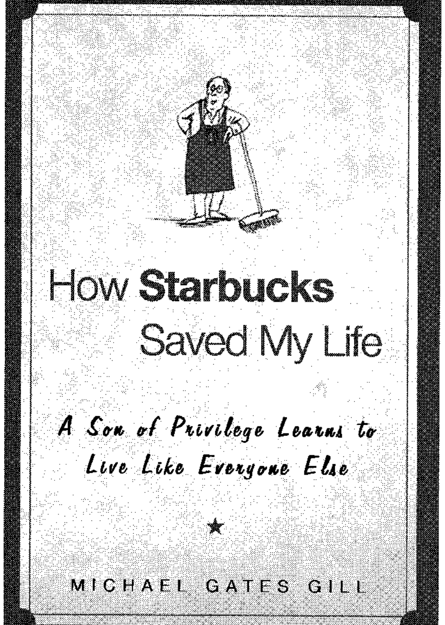
The acclaimed literary and arts festival returns.

Tickets are now available at ticketmaster.com, at all ***ticketmaster*** outlets in the New York metropolitan area, or by calling 1.877.391.0545.

Please visit **festival.newyorker.com** to sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails and to view the complete Festival guide.

CACAO RESERVE by Hershey's

"This is the true story of a white man who was kicked out of the Establishment...



How Starbucks Saved My Life
A Son of Privilege Learns to Live Like Everyone Else
MICHAEL GATES GILL

...by chance met a young African-American woman from a completely different background, and came to learn what is important in life. He was born into affluence as the son of *New Yorker* writer Brendan Gill, she into poverty in the projects. He once had a high-powered advertising job and now had nothing; she came from the streets and now had succeeded–so much so that she was able to offer a stranger a chance to save himself.

This is *my* story, and like all surprising stories, it starts with an accident."

–MICHAEL GATES GILL

GOTHAM BOOKS

ON SALE NOW

A member of Penguin Group (USA)
www.penguin.com
Wherever books are sold

their necks in the thick, messy complications of 'the real.'" Well, Zuckerman is one of them. An interested reader has only to look through the eight previous books in which he appears to find him not only up to his neck but often over his head in "the real." But Zuckerman is no longer quite the man he once was, with the capacities and the stamina and the interests of the man he once was. In his own words, he is "a no longer." He is over seventy, and age makes a difference—and the difference that it makes is a central subject of the novel.

H.L.: Nathan's disenchantment is put in front of us at the moment of the 2004 Bush-Kerry election, and much is said here about Bush's second chance "to wreck a great thing." When "The Plot Against America" was published, in 2004, many readers saw Lindbergh's Fascistic takeover as a parallel to, or a metaphor for, Bush's neocon Republican government, a parallel that you emphatically resisted. But your sense of Bush and what he is doing to America has certainly weighed on your spirits and infiltrated your work during these last seven years, isn't that so?

P.R.: Yes, what Bush is doing to America disgusted me, just as it has scores of millions of others. But, no, this weight has not infiltrated my work as a writer. "The Plot Against America" is neither an allegory nor a metaphor nor a didactic tract; "The Plot Against America" is about what it is about, which isn't now but then. I should add that it was conceived and the writing begun in the months before Bush even came to office.

Yes, "Exit Ghost" takes place during the week of the 2004 election, and choosing that week in which to set the action was, of course, deliberate. But deliberate not because what Bush is doing weighs on my spirits but because I wanted to depict that week and its effect on people in New York, particularly on the young people Zuckerman encounters, who are hardly ancillary to the novel; they make an overwhelming impression on him and play a strong role in his demise. I wanted to depict that week because of the ways that people behaved in the light of the election's results. How could that momentous week in American history fail to engage my imagination and practically beg to be absorbed in a novel? As you note, much is said "about Bush's second chance 'to wreck a great thing'"—but who says it? The young people in the novel, whom Zuckerman, a touch enviously, calls "the not yets," in contrast to "the no longers" of his generation. And why do they say it? Because that's what the young people against Bush were saying then, that was the sentiment being aired all around me. And it's the sentiment being aired all around me, the conversation that the country is having with itself—as it occurred during the McCarthy era, the Vietnam era, the Clinton-Monica Lewinsky era—that has inspired a number of the Zuckerman books. In them, I have tried to conceive in miniature something of what was happening on a national scale and to turn the public into people by delineating characters who are not symbolic but individual and whose utterances aren't symbolic but particular and integral to their predicament. I'm not out to make fiction into a political statement. Rather, I'm out to do what fiction and only fiction does: to portray in a sustained narrative those who did make political statements. I want to present in detail a strong political moment in our recent communal life, I want to try to understand what's what, to be contiguous not with my biases or anyone else's but with reality, and I do this in part by recording the rhetoric and the theatrics with which the young expressed their anguish over Bush's second victory, such as in the remark that you quote from the book.

H.L.: Nathan Zuckerman is overtaken in this novel, all in a moment, by a powerful erotic love for a very young woman, an attraction that has no enactment and no resolution in the "reality" of Nathan's life but which is enacted—as a fantasy inside an invention—in a play of "He and She." This strategy, of crossing between the possible and the impossible, and of fictionalizing a life in different ways within one novel, is something you like to do. What was its appeal to you here?

P.R.: To begin with, Zuckerman is a novelist, and it is the way of the novelist to take the raw material of life and transform it into something that is no longer life but language, language in the service of a surmise. To answer your question most directly, maybe it would be best to quote a chapter-ending paragraph from "Exit Ghost": "Isn't one's pain quotient shocking enough without fictional amplification, without giving things an intensity that is ephemeral in life and sometimes even unseen? Not for some. For some very, very few that amplification, evolving uncertainly out of nothing, constitutes their only assurance, and the unlived, the surmise, fully drawn in print on paper, is the life whose meaning comes to matter most."

The playlet "He and She" is the embodiment of Zuckerman's all-encompassing passion for—his worship of—Jamie Logan, happily married to the uxorious young Billy. Through the erotic dialogue between "he" and "she," the playlet spells out his despair in all its torturous impossibility.

H.L.: One of the fault lines in the novel is between generations. The passion that strikes Zuckerman strikes across a generation gap—just as Zuckerman's long-ago meeting with Lonoff was a crossing between generations. How central to this novel do you think are the impossibilities and grotesqueries—and the possible benefits—of such generational crossings?

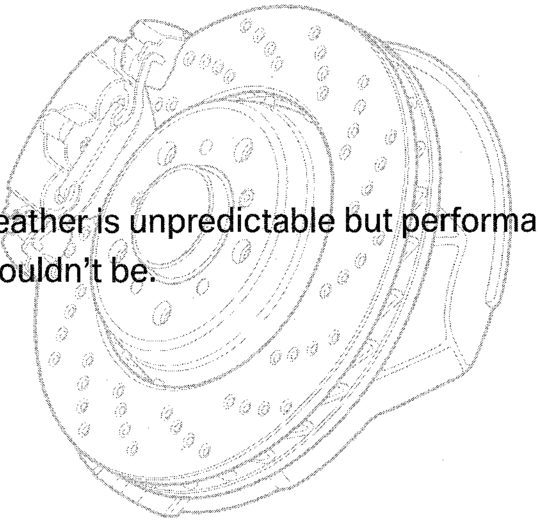
P.R.: Absolutely central.

H.L.: Your title comes from "Macbeth." Lonoff haunts Nathan like the dead poet in "Four Quartets." There is a conversation about Conrad, especially "The Shadow-Line." Lonoff's secret past is explained through an allusion to Hawthorne. These are not the only authors who stalk these pages, lending words, scenes, and phrases to the writer Zuckerman. And such references are not unusual in your novels. But how exactly does it work when you are writing? Take Conrad's "The Shadow-Line," some of whose phrases ("rash moments," "I had to steer") haunt this novel powerfully. Were you reading it as you wrote? Had you read it long ago and been waiting to find a place for it? Why is "rash moments" such an important phrase for this novel?

P.R.: The book is full of allusions to writers because all the major characters in the book are either writers, aspiring writers, translators, or serious readers, and such people talk a lot about books—at least, that's my experience with the

BMW 2007
Self-Drying Brakes
bmwusa.com
1-800-334-4BMW

The Ultimate Driving Machine


Weather is unpredictable but performance shouldn't be.

When it starts to rain, our windshield wipers tell the brakes to begin drying for improved stopping power. It could be the difference between an accident and just a close call. Self-drying brakes, another pioneering idea from BMW. Learn more at bmwusa.com/ideas.

©2007 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name, model names and logo are registered trademarks.

THE
NEW YORKER
newyorker.com

ONLINE ONLY THIS WEEK

David Remnick talks to Garry Kasparov

PLUS:

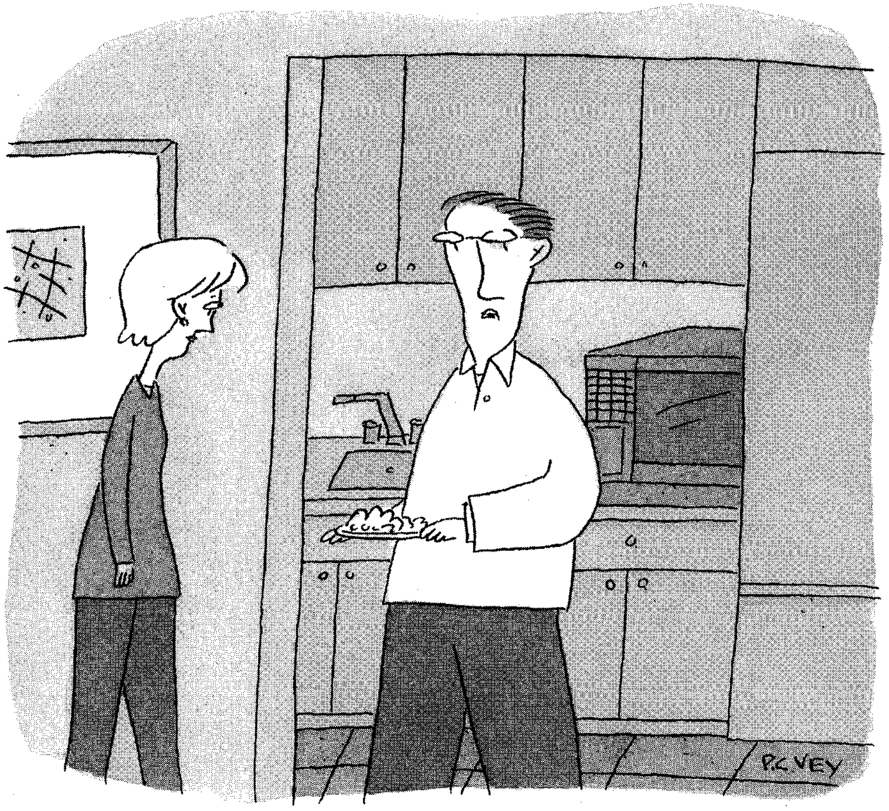
Manhattan in 1609, in maps and pictures
An audio excerpt of "On the Road: The Original Scroll"
Blogs by Hendrik Hertzberg and George Packer

SUBSCRIBE TO NEW YORKER PODCASTS AT THE iTUNES STORE
GET THE WEEKLY AUDIO EDITION AT AUDIBLE.COM/NEWYORKER

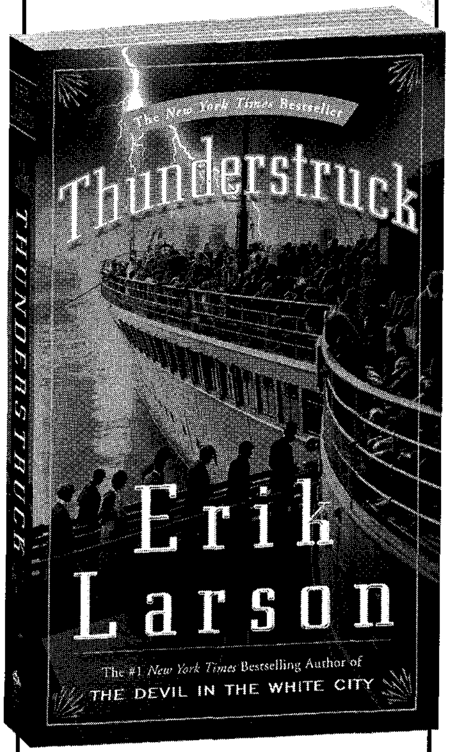
writers I know. As for Conrad's presence—yes, I spent most of my evenings a year ago last spring and summer rereading Conrad's novels and stories with great admiration as, during the day, I was writing "Exit Ghost." I was struck particularly by the power and beauty of "The Shadow-Line," and so I passed my enthusiasm on to Zuckerman. Inasmuch as my novel is marked by Zuckerman's impetuosity (an impetuosity that takes him by surprise, that he cannot control, and that, as much along the way as in the end, is a cause of the greatest dismay to him), the phrase "rash moments," which appears first in the fourth paragraph of "The Shadow-Line," jumped fortuitously off Conrad's pages and onto mine. Zuckerman, who has yielded to any number of "rash moments" by leaving his rural retreat for New York and then deciding to stay there, tries unsuccessfully to get Jamie to succumb to one by taking an interest in him, if not in real life, at least in his playlet "He and She." All he succeeds in doing—in "He and She"—is getting her to read "The Shadow-Line." In real life, it's worse—she doesn't like him at all. "Rash moments," Jamie says in "He and She," "lead to rash encounters. Rash moments . . . lead to perilous choices." Well, in real life she's having none of that, certainly not with a man forty-one years her (and her husband's) senior.

H.L.: What is George Plimpton doing in this novel, whose other characters, apart from politicians, dead writers, and Norman Mailer, are presumably all fictional?

P.R.: Unlike Kliman or Jamie or Zuckerman, George Plimpton isn't an active, living character in my novel—he is another dead writer and is spoken of at length by Zuckerman, a literary friend of his, as a dead writer. (So, too, as you have noted, are the dead writers Hawthorne, Conrad, and Eliot alluded to; so, too, is George Orwell. Norman Mailer's name appears because he was one of the speakers at Plimpton's New York memorial service, and Kliman, who was present at that service—attended by several thousand, in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine—enthusiastically recounts those goings on in great detail to Zuckerman. Mailer was a participant in no less real a historical event than the Bush-Kerry election of 2004, which, as we've noted, is a subject of scrutiny here, too.) Speculating on the meaning of Plimpton's success



"I took the last of the leftovers to stave off cannibalism."



The electrifying
New York Times bestseller
now in paperback!

From the #1 *New York Times*
bestselling author of
The Devil in the White City
and *Isaac's Storm*

"Larson is a marvelous
writer...superb at
creating characters with
a few short strokes."
—*New York Times Book Review*

"Larson's gift for rendering
an historical era with vibrant
tactility and filling it with
surprising personalities
makes *Thunderstruck*
an irresistible tale."
—*Washington Post Book World*

"A ripping yarn
of murder and invention."
—*Los Angeles Times*

ThunderstruckTheBook.com

THREE RIVERS PRESS

Also a Random House AudioBook

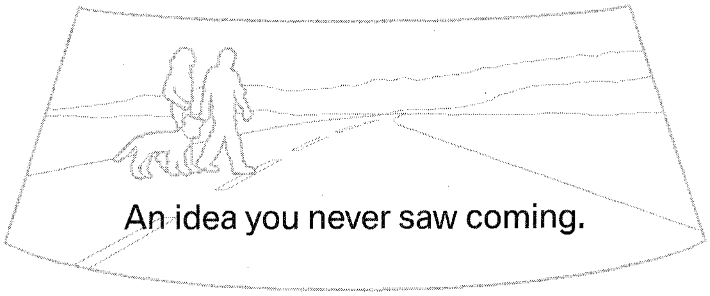
as America's leading "participatory journalist," and reflecting on the social ramifications of Plimpton's narrative perspective and the possible connections between Plimpton's social background and his subject matter, is hardly out of character for Zuckerman, a man whose life is books, not just writing them but uninterruptedly, over the decades, reading them and thinking about them. It is the news of Plimpton's death the year before—of which the reclusive Zuckerman was unaware—that prompts the longish rumination on Plimpton in the last chapter of "Exit Ghost" and that provides Zuckerman with an opportunity to ponder the radical difference between Plimpton's working days as a journalist occupationally engaged by the "great variety of life" and his own as a novelist, conducted of necessity alone and in silent seclusion. And prompts him to reach this conclusion: "Suddenly," Zuckerman thinks, "my way of being had no justification, and George was my—what is the word I'm looking for? The antonym of doppelgänger."

H.L.: One of the hauntings here is the haunting of "Exit Ghost" by "The Ghost Writer." I imagine, though I don't know this, that you reread "The Ghost Writer" while or before you were writing this book.

P.R.: Actually, I reread "The Ghost Writer" after finishing the last draft of "Exit Ghost." I did that because I didn't want to have it so fresh in my mind that it might circumscribe the imaginative work at hand. And when I read it over I did so only cursorily, to be sure I'd gotten right certain facts about the past that are recalled by the characters in "Exit Ghost." I didn't see any reason to read it any more thoroughly. I don't like to reread my books; at this stage of the game I'd much rather spend my reading time—as I have been doing—revisiting, for the last time around, other writers, like Conrad and Hemingway and Faulkner and Turgenev.

H.L.: Nathan Zuckerman, talking about Lonoff, tells Kliman that "writers can be shattered by writing." Can you say more about what he means, and what, in particular, this might mean in your own case?

P.R.: Zuckerman is talking about a writer who during the last five years of



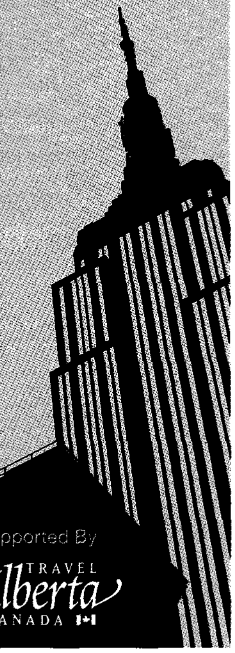
BMW 2007
Night Vision
bmwusa.com
1-800-334-4BMW

The Ultimate Driving Machine®

An idea you never saw coming.

With our Night Vision technology, you can see potential hazards up to 328 yards ahead — in the dark. Using an infrared camera, objects in the road are displayed before you. It's another visionary idea from BMW. Learn more at bmwusa.com/ideas.

©2007 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name, model names and logo are registered trademarks.



ADVERTISEMENT

on the town

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

THE NEW YORKER Festival
October 5|6|7
New York City

The acclaimed literary and arts festival returns.

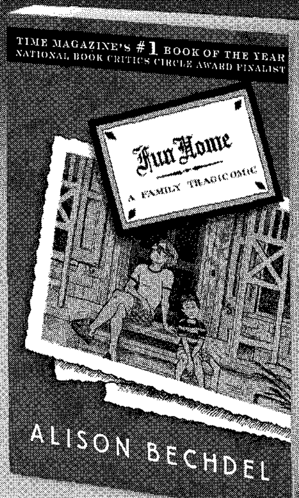
Tickets are now available at ticketmaster.com, at all ticketmaster outlets in the New York metropolitan area, or by calling 1.877.391.0545.

Please visit **festival.newyorker.com** to sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails and to view the complete Festival guide.

Supported By
TRAVEL Alberta CANADA

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

Time magazine's
#1 Book of the Year
NOW IN
PAPERBACK!


TIME MAGAZINE'S #1 BOOK OF THE YEAR
NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD FINALIST
Fun Home
A FAMILY TRAGICOMIC
ALISON BECHDEL

by ALISON BECHDEL

"A masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debt to each other." –*Time*

"A splendid autobiography... generous and intelligent." –*Entertainment Weekly*

"Pioneering... Bechdel's rich language and precise images combine to create a lush piece of work." –*New York Times Book Review*

A Best Book of the Year:
Time, Entertainment Weekly, New York Times, People, USA Today, Salon, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Village Voice, and many others

Mariner Books
www.marinerbooks.com

his life produced no finished work. There is much conjecture in "Exit Ghost" about why this happened to the once famous short-story writer. Zuckerman's remark, though it comes in the form of an assertion, is in actuality further conjecture. The remark has no meaning in my own case. I've been stymied again and again by writing fiction—at various times stymied, frustrated, mystified, thwarted, staggered, even outright defeated—but I haven't been grotesquely shattered as yet. By and large, writing fiction does the opposite—it fosters endurance. The ordeal requires the sort of fortitude that keeps one going.

H.L.: Has Nathan Zuckerman really exited for good? Will you miss him? Why have you kept him as a resource all these years?

P.R.: Yes, I mean for him to be—in the final words of the book—"gone for good." Zuckerman became a true character in my work when he was portrayed (in "The Ghost Writer"), in his early twenties, seeking to apprentice himself to the older writer E. I. Lonoff, whose austere moral stance is an enticement as great to the novice writer as are his books of ironic short stories about troubled Jews. "The Ghost Writer" takes place in the mid-nineteen-fifties in the New England locale where Zuckerman himself eventually comes to spend his sixties as the reclusive author of a dozen or so well-regarded novels. Between the first book, "The Ghost Writer," and the last, "Exit Ghost," there are seven very different books, charting Zuckerman's adventures as a writer in the U.S. (in "Zuckerman Unbound" and "The Anatomy Lesson"), in Czechoslovakia (in "The Prague Orgy"), in the U.K. and Israel (in "The Counterlife"), and, finally—with the American trilogy ("American Pastoral," "I Married a Communist," and "The Human Stain")—back in the U.S.

Zuckerman narrates these last three books from his mountaintop cabin, eight miles away from Athena College, where E. I. Lonoff was a renowned faculty member when they first met. He has come full circle geographically, and with the experience of aging and illness is, in the American trilogy, no longer a strong actor in the drama of his own life but someone removed from all turbulence, from all his deeds and misdeeds and the distraction of the pursuit of happiness—the depicter, rather, of other lives, whose personal trials and historic travails come to possess his imagination entirely and feed on the strength of his mental energy.

In the stories of Swede Levov, of Ira and Murray Ringold, of Coleman Silk, Zuckerman's is the mediating intelligence, the mind that shapes the tale. Ira Ringold, the hero of "I Married a Communist," is the dark analogue of Swede Levov, the hero of "American Pastoral." Ira: the man totally misplaced in society, a bristling, angry Jew, a defiant American, an exuberant social force with a terrible secret. The Swede: a natural, the man at ease here, a Jew wholly at peace as a satisfied American citizen, a man with no secrets at all. Ira: who rushes to radically alter history, society, the class system. The Swede: who, like most other men, endeavors to secure for himself a life beyond the reach of history's sweep, bound to and by a business, a family, and the greater society's shared ideals. Ira: the revolutionary spirit undone by the maddening incursion into his historical struggle of marital and household mayhem. The Swede: the private man, ahistorical, compliant, utterly content, crushed by the incursion into his home of the history that isn't quite yet history—destroyed by the present American moment. Coleman Silk is history's rather different plaything and a third type of hero altogether. The history he wishes radically to alter is not society's but simply his own. And he succeeds brilliantly: springs the historical lock of his own destiny, boldly remakes his social being, only to be blindsided by the current mood, by the mind of the country, by the history that is inescapable—the history that is one's own time.

The summary condensed above—some of whose sentences I've plucked from a preface I wrote to a limited edition of "The Human Stain"—constitutes the best answer I can think to give to your question "Why have you kept him as a resource all these years?" In the beginning, Zuckerman gave me Zuckerman; later he gave me the Ringolds, the Swede, and Coleman Silk. Will I miss him? No. I'm curious to see who and what will replace him. ♦

THE NEW YORKER Festival

October 5|6|7

New York City

The acclaimed literary and arts festival returns.

Tickets are now available at ticketmaster.com, at all *ticketmaster* outlets in the New York metropolitan area, or by calling 1.877.391.0545.

Please visit **festival.newyorker.com** to sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails and to view the complete Festival guide.

Please note: Tickets will also be sold **during Festival weekend, October 5th through October 7th**, at Festival Headquarters, located at 125 West 18th Street, and at event doors. For more information, go to **festival.newyorker.com**.

ACURA
ADVANCE.

citi

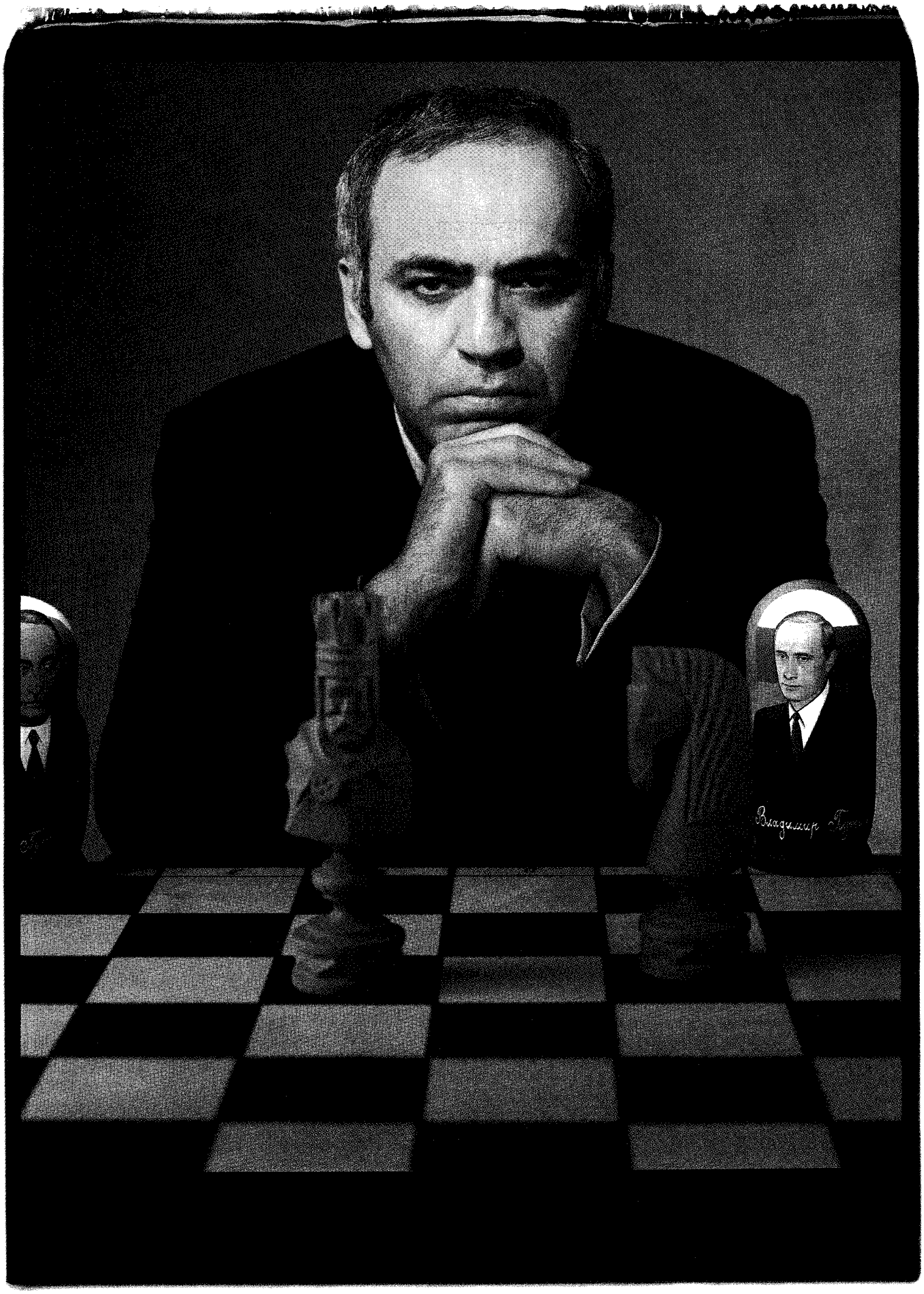
BANANA REPUBLIC

Chevron

SAMSUNG

GREY GOOSE
World's Best Tasting Vodka

[yellow tail]



Kasparov says, "I have to be careful not to become cruel, because I became a soldier too early." Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.

LETTER FROM MOSCOW

THE TSAR'S OPPONENT

Garry Kasparov takes aim at the power of Vladimir Putin.

BY DAVID REMNICK

On a recent summer evening, the greatest player in the history of chess, Garry Kasparov, wrapped up an exhausting series of meetings devoted to the defeat of the Kremlin regime. After days of debate, a motley pride of unlikely revolutionaries—bearded politicos, earnest academics, and multigrained environmentalists—collected their cigarettes and left Kasparov's apartment, divided and worn out. Little had been accomplished. Crumpled drafts of fevered proclamations lay scattered on the kitchen table. Puffy-eyed and unsmiling, Kasparov grunted a curt farewell to his comrades and went off to make yet another urgent telephone call.

Kasparov is forty-four. He was the world chess champion for fifteen years. Until his retirement, two years ago, his dominance was unprecedented. Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, Fischer—none came close. Chess has outsized meaning in Russia, and Kasparov at home was a cross between the greatest of athletes and a revered intellectual; with his status came celebrity, foreign investment accounts, summers on the Adriatic, an apartment along the Hudson River, friendships among Western politicians and businessmen, and the attentions of beautiful women. Now he has volunteered for grim and, very likely, futile duty. As the most conspicuous leader of Drugaya Rossiya (the Other Russia), an umbrella group of liberals, neo-Bolsheviks, and just about anyone else wishing to speak ill of Vladimir Putin, he is in nominal charge of opposition politics in a country that, in actuality, has no real politics except for that which takes place in the narrow and inscrutable space between the ears of its President.

Kasparov's mother, Klara, shares his apartment and his travails. "It is like we are soldiers together in the ditches," she once said. "Even when we are at a great distance, Garry and I can feel each other." Like her son, Klara Kasparova is impossibly energetic, deeply intelligent, and a touch melodramatic. It had been a tedious few days of marathon jawing and internal spats. The Other Russia was scheduled to hold its annual conference the next morning at a Holiday Inn in central Moscow, but some of its leading figures had decided to boycott over the question of whether to unify immediately behind a single Presidential candidate for the March, 2008, election.

"All day and night, people running here and there, meeting, talking, drinking tea," Klara Kasparova said, with a long sigh. Her dyed-red hair was askew, her face slack. "This apartment has been like Smolny." A romantic analogy: the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens, in St. Petersburg, had been the Bolshevik headquarters during the October Revolution. Lenin barely left the building in those manic weeks, and, when he did, he sometimes disguised himself in surgical bandages.

Kasparov's redoubt in the Arbat neighborhood of Moscow is not nearly as elegant as Smolny, but the address is one of Soviet-era privilege and among the most expensive areas on the real-estate market. Government officials and members of the cultural élite were awarded apartments there. Kasparov was never obedient or politically reliable like his great rival Anatoly Karpov, but he didn't lack for comforts. His kitchen has a flat-screen television, an Italian espresso machine, and other swish appliances that would surely have brightened Lenin's late nights at Smolny.

Kasparov pocketed his phone and slumped into a chair at the kitchen table. He is handsome and athletic, but thicker than he once was, and his hair, black and curly when he won the world championship, is now graying and cropped close to his skull. Though the meetings had ended with a split, which Russia's small opposition can ill afford, Kasparov seemed to thrive on the claustrophobic intensity of kitchen politics. "The intellectual brainstorming always takes place here," he said. "We did it like this when I was playing chess and when I was beginning in politics, in the nineties. The kitchen tradition is part of our culture."

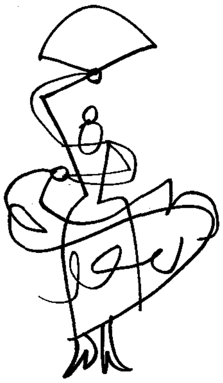
Klara asked a maid to make coffee. The espresso came *bolshoi trippio*—enormous mugs of steaming caffeine. It became easier to see how Kasparov was able to work heroic hours and then, well after midnight, settle down at his computer to play "blitz"—five-minute-long games of chess. He plays anonymously, but the cognoscenti know his style of attack. They still feel his presence. Sinatra cannot sing anonymously.

Kasparov explained why Mikhail Kasyanov, who had served for four years as Prime Minister under Putin and was now angling to run as the opposition's Presidential candidate, would skip the Other Russia conference. Kasparov, unlike Kasyanov, believes that the opposition can challenge the Kremlin only after it grows, from the bottom up; his argument, which prevailed, was that the Other Russia had to hold extensive Presidential primaries in the Russian provinces, with numerous debates and public meetings, before choosing its nominee in October. "What's the point otherwise?" Kasparov said. "The only chance to capture people's attention and get the crowds to come, to get engaged, is by demonstrating that we act democratically."

Although Kasparov's popularity ratings are higher than Kasyanov's, they are both marginal in the Land of Putin. Even if Kasparov decides to run (and he probably will), the government would not likely register his candidacy, and, even if it did, he could not win. The point is to create an alternative, not to be deluded into thinking there is an open election that can be won. Besides, Kasparov is half Armenian, half Jewish—not exactly an ideal ethnic mix for a politician in a country with deep currents of anti-Caucasian and anti-Semitic feeling.

The details of Kasparov's dispute with

Kasyanov were, ultimately, of small moment. For all practical purposes, Putin will select his successor, much as his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, designated him—unless he forgoes his promise to stand down and changes the constitution to allow a third term. Although a great many Russians would not object if he were to declare himself, Mobutu style, President for Life, it seems increasingly unlikely that he will stay.



In recent years, Putin has insured that nearly all power in Russia is Presidential. The legislature, the State Duma, is only marginally more independent than the Supreme Soviet was under Leonid Brezhnev. The governors of Russia's more than eighty regions are no longer elected, as they were under Yeltsin; since a Presidential decree in 2004, they have all been appointed by the Kremlin. Putin even appoints the mayors of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The federal television networks, by far the main instrument of news and information in Russia, are neo-Soviet in their absolute obeisance to Kremlin power. "Putin is no enemy of free speech," Ksenia Ponomareva, who worked on his first Presidential campaign, told the St. Petersburg *Times*. "He simply finds absurd the idea that somebody has the right to criticize him publicly." The business community must also obey the commands and signals of Putin's circle. There are now nearly as many billionaires in Moscow as in New York City, but the arrest for fraud, in 2003, of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, an oil magnate who had been the country's richest man, was a clear, ominous signal that wealth is dependent on Kremlin approval. Khodorkovsky, who dared to fund opposition parties, pronounce his own political ideas, and attempt to cut pipeline deals with China without Kremlin permission, is now serving an eight-year term in Penal Colony No. 10, in eastern Siberia.

Kasparov is well aware of the perils of brazen independence. Since Putin took office, in 2000, more than a dozen Russian journalists have been murdered, as have several opposition politicians. The cases remain "unresolved." When Kasparov is in Russia, he retains a security contingent that costs him tens of thousands of dollars a month. His wife, Daria Tarasova, and their baby often stay in an apartment in New Jersey. Oleg Kalugin, a former K.G.B. general who was Putin's superior in St. Petersburg twenty years ago and now lives in Maryland, told me, "You can expect anything with this regime, and Kasparov has been very vocal and very personal in his criticism of Putin. I wouldn't be surprised to hear about something terrible happening to him. And where will the evidence be? Remember that Trotsky's assassin, Señor Ramon Mercader, was sent to get him in Mexico by the K.G.B. and was secretly made a Hero of the Soviet Union. No one knew the truth for decades."

When I asked Kasparov if he feared for his life, he nodded gravely and said, "I do. The only thing I can try to do is reduce my risk. I can't avoid the risk altogether. They watch everything I do in Moscow, or when I travel to places like Murmansk or Voronezh or Vladimir. I don't eat or drink at places I'm not familiar with. I avoid flying with Aeroflot"—the Russian national airline. "It doesn't help in the end if they really decide to go after you. But, if they did, it would be really messy. And not just because of the bodyguards. There would be a huge risk for the Kremlin if anything happens to me, God forbid, because the blood would be on Putin's hands. It's not that they have an allergy to blood, but it creates a bad image, or makes it worse than it already is."

While the Russian opposition squabbles in various corners and kitchens of downtown Moscow, Vladimir Putin glides serenely, from victory to victory, along a petrodollar slick. His popularity rating is pegged at around eighty per cent, and the image of Russia abroad and at home is no longer one of imperial dissolution.

Certainly, Putin has been lucky. Russia is second only to Saudi Arabia in petroleum production and leads the world in the production of natural gas. Without Russian gas, much of Europe freezes in its bed. Oil prices have nearly tripled since 2000. Real incomes and G.D.P. continue to grow. Unlike during the Yeltsin years, pensions and state salaries have, in general, been paid and have increased. A crushing multibillion-dollar foreign debt has been paid off. As recently as five years ago, knowing analysts would dismiss the shimmering signs of wealth in Moscow—the wildfire construction projects; the new hotels, luxury stores, and restaurants; the streets clogged with Mercedes-Benzes and Bentleys—and describe them as phenomena limited solely to a tiny, criminalized upper crust. Now nearly every big urban center, from Kaliningrad, in the west, to Vladivostok, in the far east, has seen considerable growth and the first signs of a middle class. Kasparov, though, points to the widening gap between rich and poor, persistent poverty in the provinces, and the absence of human rights as "the key reasons this regime will inevitably collapse."

No less important than reversing the direction of the economy is that Putin has emboldened the national psychology. In the early years of the Yeltsin era, Russians devoured American pop culture, and the political class was eager to accept the counsel of the White House and Western economic advisers. In time, many Russians felt that Yeltsin was following America's lead in everything from arms control to monetary policy. Now that the U.S. has foundered on so many fronts—in Iraq, on questions of torture and domestic surveillance—the Kremlin reacts severely to what it perceives as American lectures on democracy. A judo expert, Putin is often able to exploit the moral and executive disasters of the Bush Administration and flip America over his hip. Last February, at a Munich security conference, Putin criticized the United States for trying to establish a "unipolar" world. Putin has adopted a haughty, derisive tone toward the West. "Of course, I am an absolutely true democrat," he remarked recently. "The tragedy is that I am alone. There are no such other democrats in the world. The Americans torture at Guantánamo, and in Europe the police use gas against protesters. Sometimes protesters are killed in the streets. We have, incidentally, a moratorium on the death penalty, which is often enforced in other G-8 countries. Let us not be hypocrites as far as democratic freedoms and human rights." [illegible] spokesman, Dmitri Peskov, told me the West "wants Russia to somehow [illegible] to the nineties, when Russia was w and could not resist. It is always comfortable to have a weak Russia next to wealthy Europe. But Russia is no longer on the brink of disintegration."

Putin sees himself as the new tsar, who, after suffering the humiliation of a lost empire, has restored strength and confidence to Russia. With the price of oil at eighty-two dollars a barrel, there is a sense of global reordering. "People feel that Putin can speak up to the United States," Tanya Lokshina, a human-rights expert, said. "He can give us an independent politics and we can even blackmail a lot of countries with our oil and gas."

Early this summer, Putin went to Guatemala City, where he delivered a speech in English—a language he'd never spoken in public—as part of Russia's campaign to host the 2014 Winter Olympics. Russia won the Games, and now the state will invest twelve billion dollars in a new Olympic Village, in the southern city of Sochi. The spoils, Putin's critics assume, will go to the Kremlin's favored contractors. Alfa Bank, one of the biggest financial institutions in Russia, sent a chipper memorandum to its investors, titled "Let the Gains Begin."

Kasparov and many other figures in the opposition believe that Putin might become the head of the International Olympic Committee—and thus occupy himself for four years before regaining the Presidency in 2012. "The I.O.C. is not the most transparent organization in the world," he said. "He can definitely buy his way on." Kasparov, like many others in the opposition, is convinced that Putin became a billionaire in office, perhaps the richest man in the country, and has entrusted Russian confederates to shelter his money in foreign banks. There is no proof of Putin's staggering wealth, but, in Kasparov's eyes, to question the proposition is to be hopelessly naïve.

Putin's popularity as an avatar of Russian tradition and state power is partly a result of the dim view that most people now take of the Yeltsin era. Not long ago, I saw Aleksei Balabanov's "Zhmurki," or "Dead Man's Bluff," a gangster film that seemed to encapsulate in bloody caricature the general view of Russia in the nineteen-nineties as chaotic, corrupt, and violent. The film opens with a professor teaching an economics class in 2005 and explaining how, after the collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union, in 1991, there was a "redivision of property"—the biggest in the history of humanity. This was a period in which the "so-called oligarchs" acquired their oil fields, gold mines, and banks.

"Does anyone know how?" she asks.

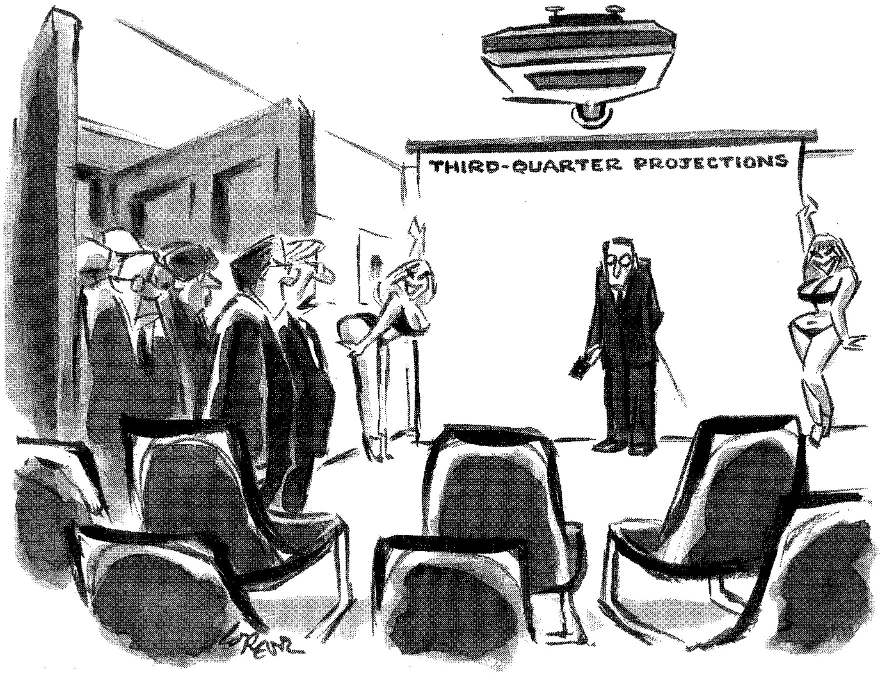
"Back then," an eager student says, "you could make heaps of money from nothing."

"And there were also criminal groups," the professor adds, "which merged with the authorities and, in doing so, acquired their start-up capital."

Then comes a title card ("The Mid-1990's") and a grisly scene in which a killer named the Professional is torturing a rival gangster in a morgue. (The film contains more torture than the collected works of Quentin Tarantino.) In the final sequence, a pair of sadistic hit men steal five kilos of heroin from their boss—their "start-up capital"—and run off to Moscow, where they exchange their leather jackets and pistols for dark suits and jobs in the Kremlin bureaucracy.

In today's Russia, *demokratia* as it emerged in the nineties has been derisively called *dermokratia:* "shit-ocracy." The notion of liberalism, too—a belief in the necessity of civil society, civil liberties, an open economy—has been degraded. Of all the pro-democracy activists and politicians of the late eighties and the nineties, the only one remembered fondly—if not very often—is the physicist and human-rights activist Andrei Sakharov. And that may be because he died in December, 1989, two years before the fall of the Soviet empire. The liberal parties that began in the nineties, such as Yabloko (Apple) and the Union of Right Forces, remain tainted by their connections to the Yeltsin era and no longer have seats in the Duma. "The state lets the opposition exist so long as there is no coalition," Mikhail Kasyanov, the former Prime Minister, told me.

"You can scarcely find anyone in opposition, except for the Communists, just like in Yeltsin's times," Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn recently told *Der Spiegel.* "If you take an unbiased look at the situation, there was a rapid decline of living standards in the nineteen-nineties, which affected three-quarters of Russian families, and all under the 'democratic banner.' Small wonder, then, that the population does not rally to this banner anymore." Solzhenitsyn, who lives just outside Moscow, is eighty-eight, and in failing health. Although much of his work as a novelist and historian comprises a prolonged critique of Soviet power and the secret police, he speaks approvingly of Putin, who was a lieutenant colonel in the K.G.B. "Putin inherited a ransacked and bewildered country, with a poor and demoralized



"More bad news!"

people," he said. "And he started to do what was possible—a slow and gradual restoration."

Kasparov argues that Putin's popularity is the phony popularity of dictators. "The support for Putin is a kind of passive resistance to change," he said. "You cannot talk about polls and popularity when all of the media are under state control. I don't want to give anyone any bad ideas, but with such a propaganda apparatus, backed up by an all-powerful security force, seventy-per-cent approval should be a minimum!"

Two great traditions have survived in Russia: the power of the secret police and the use of allegory as a means of truthtelling. In Putin's Russia, the latter is one of the few effective means of describing the former.

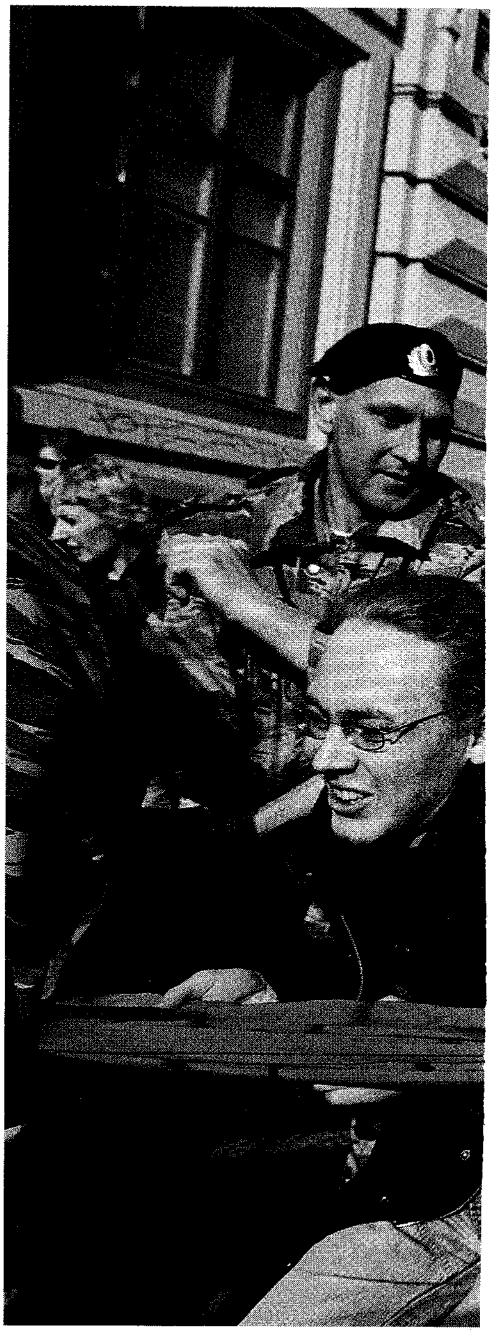
Recently, Vladimir Sorokin, a writer in his fifties with a flair for surreal brutality, published a dystopian novel called "Day of the Oprichnik." The *oprichniki* were the secret police of the sixteenth century, Ivan the Terrible's K.G.B. In Sorokin's depiction of an authoritarian Russia set in the year 2028, the ruler controls all destinies and information. The state's well-being depends on oil and gas and the individual's survival on unquestioning fealty to a bloody-minded despot and his circle of *oprichniki.* The state itself is profoundly conservative, traditional.

The allegory is easy to follow. Putin and many of his top officials in the Kremlin, ministers and advisers, come from the ranks of the K.G.B., many from his home city of St. Petersburg. Yeltsin made tentative attempts to reform the security services, but they failed. "The system of political police has been preserved," Yeltsin admitted, "and it could be resurrected." During the nineties, the oligarchs staffed their organizations with well-trained, well-informed ex-K.G.B. advisers, but Putin has reversed the hierarchy. The *siloviki*—the security men—are now more prevalent in the Kremlin than Harvard men were in the Kennedy White House. Olga Kryshtanovskaya, an expert on political élites, estimates that *siloviki* occupy more than sixty per cent of "high" and "upper middle" positions in the state. They run numerous Kremlin departments, bureaucracies, banking operations, and state corporations.

In a book-length interview about his life, "First Person," Putin says that when he was stationed in East Germany, in the eighties, he was often idle as Communism itself was collapsing. He mainly drank the local brew—"you pour the beer into the keg, you add a spigot, and you can drink straight from the barrel"—and gained twenty-five pounds. But, as President, he has not hesitated to show loyalty to his erstwhile employer and enhance its power. "There is no such thing as a former Chekist," he says, referring to the original name of the Soviet secret police.

Under Putin's K.G.B. old-boy network, one of his colleagues in East Germany, Sergei Chemezov, has been installed as the head of Rosoboronexport, a state arms corporation. The two deputy heads of the Presidential Administration, Igor Sechin and Viktor Ivanov, are ex-spies from St. Petersburg, and they have placed former colleagues in leadership positions everywhere from the Ministry of Justice to the largest industries. Sechin himself is the chairman of the biggest state-operated oil company, Rosneft, and Ivanov chairs the board of directors for Aeroflot and Almaz-Antei, a producer of air-defense systems.

Some of the gaudiest events in recent Russian history—the murders, the arrests of disobedient business executives, the muscling of uncoöperative foreign companies—are thought by many to be tied to the K.G.B.'s successor agency, the F.S.B. (Federal Security Service), although the over-all structure of the regime, its mode of corruption, its strategic way of controlling society and the economy and dealing with the outside world, is many times more sophisticated than the bumbling of the late Soviet era. Putin is not a dictator—not in the Stalinist sense. He knows that to play in the global economy he must bring his resources to the marketplace and behave with a modicum of decorum. When anyone gets in his way, he can employ the F.S.B., but in a highly selective manner. In the modern world, the political use of the tax police or a single, well-publicized incident of mysterious brutality is far more effective than mass repression and the Gulag.



Moscow riot police arrest opposition proteste

MAX AVDEEV

And, in the experience of Vladimir Putin, who can prove to him that stability and prosperity demand democratic politics? Without the trappings of democracy, China is hoping it will become the world's biggest economy. Oil-rich and liberty-poor Iran and Venezuela are ascendant. And Russia itself is growing richer; with the foreign debt gone, a multibillion-dollar stabilization fund has been established as a hedge against lower oil prices. For the first few years of Putin's reign, there were several liberal advisers in his retinue, but once oil prices began to rise, from around twenty-five dollars a barrel to more than three times that, and analysts determined that such prices were sustainable, a more assertively statist policy took hold. Liberal advisers were fired or marginalized, kept

ОССИЯ ФРАНЦИЯ
ОМОН

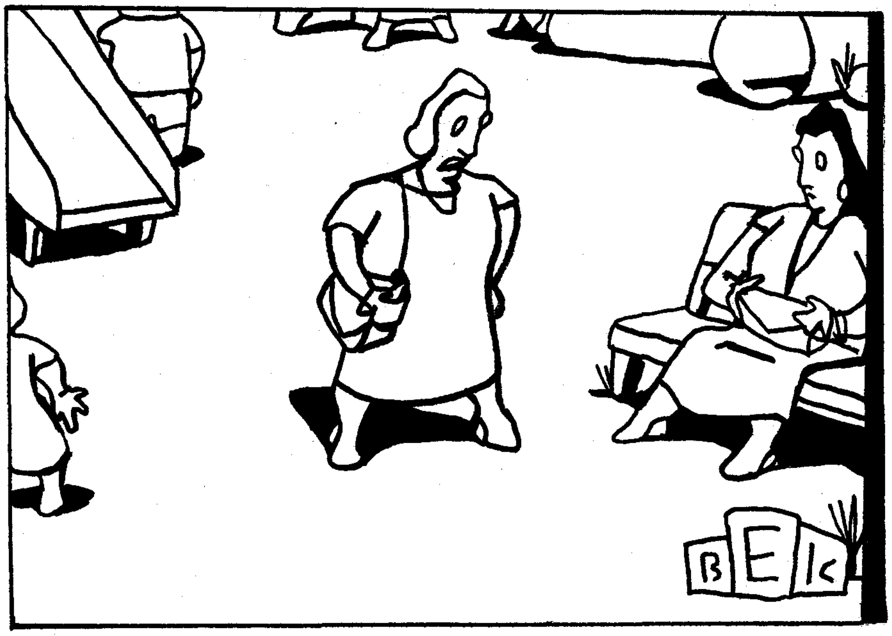
a march near the Lubyanka, the headquarters of the Federal Security Service, earlier this year.

on only as decoration for Western eyes. And few complain.

"The vast majority of people enjoy the fact that for the first time in Russian history they have lived for fifteen years now without the constant pressure of totalitarianism in every aspect of their lives," Vladimir Milov, an economist who left Putin's government in 2002, said. "For example, you can travel abroad freely. The majority of people can't yet afford to do this, but the most active and educated can, and this makes a huge difference. The authorities here let you exist so long as you don't call them into question. In other words, the deal they offer is: You let us steal and we let you live."

In 1989, in the midst of the reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, two well-known social scientists, Andranik Migranyan and Igor Klyamkin, published a dialogue in the weekly newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, in which Migranyan said, "Nowhere, not in any country of the world was there ever a direct transition from a totalitarian regime to democracy. There has always been a necessary provisional authoritarian period." At the time, the liberal intellectuals of Moscow dismissed the article as reactionary. Now the Russians seem apolitical and willing to overlook the sins of a state run by K.G.B. instincts; most people want nothing more than to settle into private life.

Under Yeltsin, a small group of businessmen used their connections to the Kremlin to buy up state enterprises—oil companies, aluminum plants, transport systems—and made their fortunes. Putin instituted new rules: these oligarchs could keep their properties so long as they did not create political power bases outside the Kremlin. The Kremlin would not hesitate to nationalize the enterprise or put its ministers on the board of directors. "Gazprom is not a company," Milov said. "It has a new wrapping, people in



"There are three other Elijah Foxface Maxwells in his class already."

good suits and ties, but it is a classic Soviet enterprise. All you have now is an upper echelon that takes all the money." Putin's former chief of staff, Dmitri Medvedev, is, simultaneously, the first Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian government and the chairman of the board of Gazprom.

The March Presidential elections will be notable for which corporate groups have patrons at the top. "In the past seven years, Putin has skillfully balanced these clans, not allowing any single one of them to take too powerful a lead," Yuri Dzhibladze, a human-rights activist, said. "He is the supreme arbiter. When he destroyed and split up Yukos"—Khodorkovsky's oil company—"he distributed it all around. He is the check and he is the balance. When he leaves the Presidency, the problem will be that these groups do not get along."

Putin has promised to propose one or more successors, but, rather than make himself an instant lame duck, he has avoided direct endorsements, using mystery as a political tool. On September 12th, Putin dissolved the government and appointed a relatively obscure bureaucrat, Viktor Zubkov, as Prime Minister. Zubkov promptly declared that if he succeeded "in doing something in the post of premier" he might run for President. Putin called Zubkov, who is sixty-six, a "brilliant administrator and true professional" but made no endorsement.

In the meantime, every political expert in Moscow, real and self-proclaimed, has a theory. Another strong candidate, some speculate, is the other first Deputy Prime Minister, Sergei Ivanov, a former defense minister. Ivanov spent two decades in the secret services, first alongside Putin in the Leningrad K.G.B.'s foreign-intelligence division, then in posts in Africa and Europe, and, finally, as a general at Moscow headquarters. He speaks English and Swedish, but he is not considered to be particularly enamored of the West. Medvedev, the other Deputy Prime Minister, is also a possible contender. And then comes a litany of potential candidates, including the railway minister, Vladimir Yakunin, who is thought to have worked for the K.G.B. when he was a diplomat at the United Nations, and various parliamentary loyalists, ministers, and regional governors. The essence of the election, however, is not the individual but the means. The winner will be a man of the inner circle—a Presidential, not a popular, choice.

"Here is how it will go: Putin will decide the successor and he will be elected without much struggle," Vladimir Ryzhkov, a young (and very lonely) liberal in the Duma, said. "All the opposition will be put on as a show for stupid foreigners like you to demonstrate what a great democracy we are. And all the resources of the media will be employed to put on this show."

Yevgeny Gontmakher, an economist who worked as a senior adviser to the Cabinet until 2003, told me, "Even Putin doesn't know what he's going to do yet. He is just reacting to events, day by day. You might see him make some democratic-seeming moves toward the end of the year. He wants to legitimatize his power in the eyes of the West. There won't be a third term. He wants to join the club of former Presidents: Bush, Chirac, and all the rest. At the same time, there are a lot of problems that are coming due and there is always the chance that the price of oil will drop. Winning the Olympics for Sochi marked the peak of his popularity. So why hang on?"

Yet stories persist that Putin may yet do so. According to a report in the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, a Kremlin working group is examining scenarios for constitutional change to allow Putin more terms. The pro-Kremlin party, United Russia, has well in excess of the two-thirds majority needed to alter the law. In the end, though, Putin will almost certainly prefer to maintain the patina of democratic procedure—"I have no intention to reduce everything I've done to zero"—and preserve a strong influence over his successor. When he was asked earlier this month about his desire to continue in public life, Putin, with characteristic vagueness, said, "I hope to be fit enough and I have the desire to do so. Any future President will have to reckon with that."

Living in Moscow in the late nineteen-eighties and the early nineties, I spent many weekend mornings at various halls around the city—the House of Film, the Architect's Union, the Writer's Union—listening to Moscow intellectuals make speeches demanding that Gorbachev push reforms forward, faster. Kasparov's political education took place at these meetings. He was at the zenith of his celebrity as a chess champion. Within a few years of Gorbachev's rise to power, in March, 1985, political groups called *nyeformali*, or "informals," were created, first in Moscow and then throughout the Soviet Union. The most important of these early groups was Moscow Tribune, a "discussion group," dominated by former political dissidents like Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz, and Sergei Kovalyov and a range of *shestidesyatniki*, intellectual members of the sixties generation, who came of age after the death of Stalin. With Kasparov often sitting in the audience, they discussed history, economics, democratization, human rights, and ethnic problems in the Caucasus, the Baltic States, and Central Asia.

"The environment was different in 1987, 1988, 1989 than it is now," Kasparov said. "There was consensus in Soviet society that the game was over. There was a demand for change. People were opposed to the old Soviet system, from the feudal republics in Central Asia to the Baltics, which were essentially part of Europe. The system had outlived itself. But there was no clear plan. There was a demand. Everyone recognized that oil prices were going down and the Soviet system would collapse. . . . Today, the majority of people don't like what they feel and see, but there is a defensive layer: what if something else is worse? They remember it could be worse like it was when the economy collapsed in 1998, or when the Union collapsed, in 1991."

One of the earliest ethnic conflicts under Gorbachev was the dispute in the Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. In those days, Kasparov split his time between his home town, Baku, the Azerbaijani capital, and frequent trips to Moscow and matches abroad. On January 13, 1990, he and his team of chess trainers were at a resort north of Baku, preparing for a match. The atmosphere throughout the region was tense. There had already been violence against the minority populations, especially against Armenians in the town of Sumgait. That evening in Baku, gangs stormed through Armenian neighborhoods, beating men, women, and children. They torched apartments and houses; there were rapes and stabbings.

Kasparov wanted to help his friends and relatives in Baku, but he was stuck; there were rumors that the gangs were headed to the resort where he was training and to other towns in the republic. A few days later, he was able to go to his apartment in Baku but had time only to grab some family pictures and childhood chess notebooks. The Azerbaijanis, together with the K.G.B., had shut down most flights, trains, and other transport out of Baku. Kasparov, however, was somehow able to arrange a chartered plane from Moscow. On the seventeenth, he filled all sixty-eight seats with other Armenians and left for the Soviet capital. When the violence subsided, almost all of the Armenians who still lived in Baku had fled. On January 20th, the Soviet Army, under Gorbachev's command, moved into Baku not to save Armenians—it was too late for that—but to protect the leadership of the Azerbaijani Communist Party against a growing opposition. Kasparov, whose privilege allowed him to stay at the Regency Hotel in New York and the St. James Club in Paris, had become a refugee. He has never returned to Baku.

"I always believed that a city is not the stones, a city is the people," he told the magazine *New in Chess*. "Baku is no longer the Baku where I was born and where I used to live. There are some gravestones at the cemetery. My father, my two grandfathers, and one grandmother were buried there. But it is just a matter of stones."

The Moscow intelligentsia was ambivalent about Gorbachev. He had freed Sakharov from his forced exile in Gorky and gradually unfettered the press, the publishing houses, and the universities. But by 1989 many had grown impatient with his need to maneuver between the demands of the old élites of the Communist Party and the K.G.B. and the demands of the urban intellectuals who wanted him to abandon the entire Soviet system. Few were more unforgiving of Gorbachev than Kasparov. After the pogroms in Baku, he had met with Gorbachev and found him unmoved and "unimpressed" by his accounts of the bloodshed there. "All he could talk about was some new chief of the Azerbaijani Communist Party," Kasparov said. "For him, it was all big picture. To sacrifice a single life did not seem to greatly matter." When Kasparov travelled abroad, and when he wrote for Western newspapers like the *Wall Street Journal*, he denounced Gorbachev as a liar, a clever and desperate apparatchik, "the last leader of the communist state, trying to save everything he can." Before the first Gulf War, Kasparov told anyone who would listen that the United States should drop an atomic bomb on Saddam Hussein. During the resistance in Moscow to the 1991 coup attempt, Kasparov took the conspiratorial position that Gorbachev had been behind the plot—that, in an effort to establish a national state of emergency and yet "keep his hands clean," he had pretended to be under house arrest at his dacha in the town of Foros, in Ukraine.

"I guess I am fifteen years older now, more experienced," Kasparov told me. "I was young and my political education was Soviet. I saw things in black-and-white, Communist and anti-Communist. Now in the Other Russia I find myself having to compromise with people who were my sworn enemies." His newfound diplomacy, however, does not prevent him from comparing Putin's Kremlin to "the Mafia" and "the Stalin regime."

Kasparov says that he was "dead wrong" to support Yeltsin for reëlection to the Russian Presidency in 1996, even though it was a fairly open secret that Yeltsin, who had started a cruel and senseless war in Chechnya, was too addled to rule effectively. Rather than risk allowing Yeltsin's opponent, the Communist Gennady Zyuganov, to come to power, Kasparov was one of those who chose to ignore the fact that Yeltsin, supported by oligarchs hoping to maintain their status, returned to power in a crooked ballot.

"We knew it was neither a fair nor a free election," Kasparov said. "But we so feared a Communist resurrection that I personally went to Communist strongholds—Ulyanovsk, Kursk, Kaluga—and campaigned. Then Yeltsin was elected and the country was looted by these men who put him forward."

Kasparov is hardly a conventional politician. His appeal is the stubborn purity, almost naïveté, of his politics, the prestige of his former position as chess champion, and the public sense that he is an idealist. Even the leaders of the anti-Putin intelligentsia who argue with Kasparov recognize that he could easily have lived a comfortable life in

Moscow or joined the flow of rich migrants to South Kensington, the Seventh Arrondissement, or the Upper East Side.

"The understanding of what an opposition is has been compromised in recent years—it's a term used ironically or skeptically or dismissed entirely," said Arseny Roginsky, the chairman of Memorial, a group devoted to human rights and historical memory. "This is the era of exposés and scandals, and everyone is seen to be crawling back to the Kremlin, for funding or whatever. This is the era of complete distrust. And so everyone's opposition credentials are disdained or dismissed. Except for Garry. He is unique, really. No one doubts that he is in opposition to the Kremlin. He might be a good politician or a bad politician, but no one doubts his sincerity. In Russia today, you need to believe that an opposition exists—the image of an opposition, even. Kasparov is honest. As a little boy, part Jewish, part Caucasian, he had huge responsibilities. Now he plays a different game. And this earns him respect. It's also important that he is so famous. He belongs to the world."

"I don't completely understand Garry, but he has huge reserves of energy and talent," Ludmila Alexeeva, a sixties-era dissident and a leader of the Moscow Helsinki Group, a predominant human-rights organization, said. "Russia, historically, has had its share of idealists. And I would say that Garry is in that tradition."

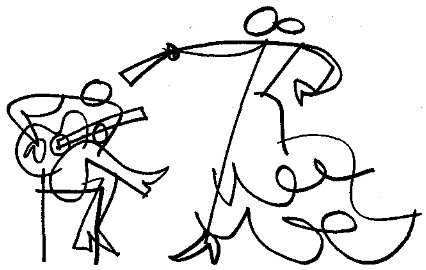
Kasparov's demeanor hardly resembles Sakharov's saintly carriage. After losing a match, he could be dismissive of autograph-seekers, rude to waiters, self-centered in the extreme; sometimes he would humiliate the grand masters who helped to train him, pouncing on a piece of dubious advice and showing them, move by move, just how feebleminded their suggestion was. Like anyone who has been the focus of admiration since kindergarten, Kasparov is ego-driven; people wait on him; friends, family, and wives (there have been three) know that his needs come first. And yet, for the most part, he is as generous as he is intelligent. Despite the single-minded attention he has given to an abstruse game of sixty-four squares, he is interested in everything from sports (soccer, especially) to literature (his favorite novel is Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita," a celebrated example of allegory in the Soviet era).

Kasparov was born in 1963 in Baku. His father, Kim Weinstein, was Jewish, and his mother, Klara Kasparova, Armenian. When Garry was around six, he picked up an endgame puzzle in the newspaper and solved it, even though he didn't yet know the rules of chess. "Since Garry knows how the game ends," his father said, "we ought to teach him how it begins."

The next year, Kim Weinstein died, of cancer. Garry started to play chess obsessively. In those days, chess was a Soviet obsession and the regime sponsored an elaborate network of chess academies; Garry started to train at one run by the former world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. At the age of twelve, Garry was attracting national attention in chess, and he took his mother's family name. "When I began to have public success at chess, it seemed natural," he said. "My teacher, Botvinnik, himself of Jewish ancestry, added that it wouldn't hurt my chances of success in the U.S.S.R. not to be named Weinstein." The next year, he played his first tournament abroad, and by eighteen he was the Soviet champion, surrounded by admirers and under endless pressure to perform.

"The loss of my childhood was the price for becoming the youngest world champion in history," Kasparov once said. "When you have to fight every day from a young age, your soul can be contaminated. I lost my childhood. I never really had it. Today I have to be careful not to become cruel, because I became a soldier too early."

From the start, Kasparov's sights were set on a single enemy—Anatoly Karpov. For more than a decade, their confrontations were the story of chess. Like heavyweight championship bouts, matches for the world chess championship have a way of taking on political meaning. Bobby Fischer's psychodramatic match with Boris Spassky in Iceland, thirty-five years ago, was a Cold War epic (of a particularly neurotic type). In the popular press, it was not enough to say that Spassky failed to contend with Fischer's brilliant and unpredictable openings; more comprehensibly, it was a triumph of American ingenuity over a sclerotic Soviet bureaucracy.



In 1984, when Kasparov made his first bid for the world title, the political drama was purely Soviet. The regime was in its last year before perestroika. Konstantin Chernenko, a career apparatchik, directed the imperium from his sickroom. His senescence was a symbol of the regime. The market stalls and store shelves were bare. The technological age had arrived—but not in the Soviet Union. Karpov, the world champion, was an exemplar of the Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko "era of stagnation," an obedient member of the *nomenklatura*. As a player, he was a defensive artist, whose style, like Kutuzov's in war, was to absorb and smother attacks and then destroy his confounded opponent. Like Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, he was a living symbol of official Soviet achievement.

Kasparov represented a new generation. At twenty-one, he was ironic, full of barely disguised disdain for the regime. He was a member of the Communist Party until 1990—his chess ambitions required it—but no one saw him as subservient. Rather, he was cast, in his challenge to Karpov, as a champion of the young and of the outsiders. His chess style was swift, imaginative, daring—sometimes to the point of recklessness. Karpov painted academic still-lifes; Kasparov was an Abstract Expressionist. He prepared thoroughly, but at some point, he once said, he played by instinct, "by smell, by feel."

This first Karpov-Kasparov championship match, which began in September, 1984, coincided with my first trip to Moscow, and I attended several games at the Hall of Columns, the stately venue where Stalin had lain in state, thirty-one years earlier. Every morning, the two men entered from the wings and walked to a chess board at center stage. They sat hunched over the pieces for hours at a time, inches from each other, breathing the same overheated air, Karpov staring at his position, Kas-

DREAM WITH FLOWERS AND BOWL OF FRUIT

Too many of my dreams these days are boring.
I expect to drop into the pillow
and see the kind of action night is for—
a psychic workout, romance, close escapes:
Not much gets accomplished in a still-life;

nobody looks at asters as a way
to get a taste of life. I want to *happen*,
not to slightly rearrange my day
nightly in a recurring tablescape.
Dreams! However beautiful the apples,

fruit is low on drama, and I miss
passion, flying, falling, being chased,
crashing, panic—trauma—and I miss,
small and quick, a movement in the grapes,
and the shiver of a petal in the vase.

—Deborah Warren

parov staring at Karpov, or, at times, clawing at his hair, rolling his eyes, expressing his emotions with the eye-bulging theatricality of a silent-film star. In the balcony, nearly everyone was pro-Kasparov. They loved his anti-establishment glamour, his audacity at the board even when he lost.

Karpov dominated Kasparov in the early games, taking a four-games-to-none lead. He needed only two more wins to retain the title. The crowds began to thin out. Then Kasparov did something astonishing: in the course of a championship match, he learned to play at a new level. In Game 15, a turning point in the match, Karpov was up a pawn but could play only to a draw after an astonishingly long game—ninety-three moves. Kasparov was figuring out Karpov the way an astute hitter, after repeated, chastening strikeouts, figures out a pitcher. The next eleven games were draws. In Game 27, Karpov won once more, but, again, Kasparov kept forestalling the end—twenty more drawn games came and went, brutal and wearing—and then, suddenly, he took Games 47 and 48. It was now February. The score was five games to three, but the advantage had turned. Finally, the tournament authorities called it off, claiming that both players were exhausted. Kasparov was convinced that the chess establishment, backed by the Soviet authorities, had rescued Karpov. He was furious, but he had learned his opponent thoroughly. He had mastered him. The next year, again in Moscow, Kasparov won the title.

Between 1984 and 1990, the two men played five championship matches, and Kasparov had the edge, with twenty-one wins, nineteen losses, and a hundred and four draws. Like Frazier and Ali, the two openly despised each other, but through the ferocity of their battles and the differences in their styles they brought out the best in each other. Kasparov suffered through these battles. In defeat, he was capable of fugue states that lasted for days. And yet the crazy depth of commitment and passion, as well as the daring of his style, made him feel alive. "Chess for Garry was never a game," Fred Waitzkin, his friend and biographer, said. "It was about living and dying, about redefining the art every time he played."

Although Kasparov finally lost the title, to Vladimir Kramnik, in 2000, he remained the most highly rated player for another five years. "To be a world champion in chess, the amount of what you have to know, what you have to fit in your brain and master, is so big that it is incomprehensible to a normal person," Waitzkin said. "You have to know more than a nuclear physicist or a brain surgeon knows. You have to know more stuff than virtually anyone on earth. Then you have to have the facility of mind to process it and then forget it so that you are free to improvise and be imaginative."

In the popular imagination, if not among chess aficionados, Kasparov's one lingering rival was a retired lunatic—Bobby Fischer. Whenever I visited chess clubs in Moscow, players would ask about Fischer. Both of his parents, according to most sources, were Jewish, but since the early nineteen-sixties Fischer has been a vocal anti-Semite. After Fischer defeated Spassky for the championship, in 1972, his behavior grew more erratic. He lived in Tokyo and Belgrade, and finally moved to Iceland. When a Filipino radio station reached Fischer just after the September 11th attacks, he rejoiced. "I want the U.S. wiped out," he said. "I'm hoping for a 'Seven Days in May' scenario, where the country will be taken over by the military, they'll close down all the synagogues, arrest all the Jews, execute hundreds of thousands of Jewish ringleaders." Fischer also accused Russian players, including Kasparov, of taking part in fixed games.

Kasparov is always careful to give Fischer his due as a player ("probably he was second to me") and avoid the rest. But when Fischer played Spassky again, in 1992, Kasparov could not resist telling *New in Chess* that Fischer was "like [Bjorn] Borg playing tennis with a wooden racket. . . . Now he's someone from the past. He doesn't belong to our world. He's an alien."

Kasparov maintained his sanity and charm as champion, but, as he entered his forties, he lost patience with the game. The bureaucracies of world chess are so arcane that Kasparov, despite having the highest rating in the world, despite heavily publicized matches against computers, could not seem to get a rematch with Kramnik. He was sure that he was still the best player in the world, but he could not prove it.

"When I lost to Kramnik in 2000, it wasn't easy to contemplate coming back," he said. "I spent two years trying to recover my position, studying, playing. . . . I never lost my desire, but I really need to be at a cutting edge. I played the computer. I was looking around.”

Kasparov was having a hard time keeping his concentration. He had tried to add to his considerable fortune with various business schemes—the export of Russian sculptures, an attempt to buy GUM, the huge shopping complex across Red Square from the Kremlin—all of which failed. “I was a bad businessman,” Kasparov told me. “I'm a big-picture guy; I don't like to stick around for the details.” By 2004, Kasparov was losing interest even in chess. “It was a year of unravelling,” he said. He had already been through one divorce, and now he was in the midst of a second.

“I didn't want to leave the chess world on a down note,” he said. “But I wanted my son to see me onstage, just once, winning. The Russian championships were in Moscow in 2004, and my son turned eight. So I took him to the Rossiya Hotel and I won and he got to see the closing ceremonies and wore the medal around his neck.”

In early 2005, Kasparov planned to play one last tournament, in Linares, a chess center in southern Spain. He told only his mother and his third wife-to-be, Daria Tarasova, a business-school graduate from St. Petersburg, about his intention to quit. After clinching first place in the round-robin tournament, Kasparov lost his final game, to Veselin Topalov. There is a clip on YouTube of the closing half hour of that last session. Kasparov suffers more flamboyantly than Sarah Bernhardt. He mops his face with a handkerchief. He looks mournfully at the lights. When he resigns, you worry that he might do himself in. “I finally felt, I just don't want to do this anymore,” he told me. “It was very strange. I've changed my routine and my focus but I haven't lost my fighting spirit.”

Not long ago, Kasparov gave a speech at the Four Seasons restaurant to members and guests of the Hudson Institute, a neoconservative think tank. Among the guests were the broadcaster and former Nixon aide Monica Crowley and the ur-neocon Norman Podhoretz, the former editor of *Commentary*, who had just signed on as a foreign-policy adviser to Rudolph Giuliani.

Kasparov gave a version of the same speech that he had lately given in Washington and Toronto. There were a few notes of reassurance—“Putin's regime is not a geopolitical monster”—but there was no shortage of stark warning. “The Cold War was based on ideas, like them or not,” Kasparov said. “Putin's only idea can be concentrated into the motto ‘Let's steal together.’ ”

When one of the guests asked what could be done to help the Russian opposition, Kasparov was careful not to inspire any old Cold War fantasies, saying, “We are not looking for support from the outside. What we want from the leaders of the free world is for them to say to Mr. Putin, ‘You cannot act like Lukashenko’ ”—the erratic President of Belarus—“ ‘or Mugabe or Hugo Chávez and still be treated as a democratic leader.’ ”

Kasparov speaks frequently to two sorts of audiences in the West: business groups, which seem to see him as another variety of an American crop—the executive coach—and conservative political groups. He is John Naisbitt with a queen's-gambit twist. His conceit is that success in the boardroom requires the same sort of planning, strategy, and discipline as success on the chessboard. This is the sort of can-do hokum he pitches in a new book called “How Life Imitates Chess.” Kasparov is also popular among the American right. In 1991, he won the Keeper of the Flame Award from the Center for Security Policy, another neocon think tank. The award, which is given to “individuals for devoting their public careers to the defense of the United States and American values around the world,” has also gone to Newt Gingrich, Paul Wolfowitz, and Donald Rumsfeld.

Such an award does Kasparov no good at home. There is a centuries-long tradition in Russia of xenophobia. In the Soviet era, Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak, and hundreds of others were accused in the pages of *Pravda* of working for the C.I.A., M.I.6, or the Mossad. Vladimir Kryuchkov, who was the head of the K.G.B. under Gorbachev and directed the August, 1991, coup, was constantly trying to convince Gorbachev that his most liberal adviser, Alexander Yakovlev, was acting as a covert “agent of imperialist intelligence agencies.” And so while Kasparov's business-class ease abroad might be appealing to Americans, it makes him an easy target for Russians who have grown weary of what they sense to be

“You probably already know this disease from the walkathon of the same name.”

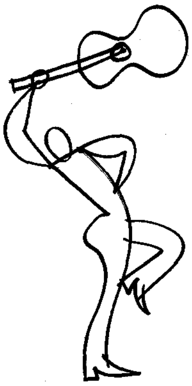
the cultural and political arrogance of the West.

Putin has deftly exploited Russians' traditional suspicion of the outsider. Boris Dubin, of the Levada Center, the country's most independent and reliable public-opinion institute, said that in 1994 forty-one per cent of the population believed that Russia was surrounded by enemies; by 2003 the number was seventy-seven per cent. Putin is widely applauded when he lashes out at his neighbors—cutting off gas supplies to Ukraine, waging a kind of cold war with Georgia. In 2000, just before becoming President, Putin told a gathering of the F.S.B., "A few years ago, we succumbed to the illusion that we don't have enemies and we have paid dearly for that." Putin and his team have made it plain that Russia would not tolerate the sort of uprisings that have taken place in Ukraine and Georgia, and they have blamed those events on support from foreign groups like the National Endowment for Democracy.

Behind this newfound sense of confidence is also a shift in ideology. In the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, the "gray cardinal" of ideological correctness was a severe, ascetic figure named Mikhail Suslov. Suslov spoke in the cadences of "State and Revolution." Putin's strategist, a smooth former business executive in his early forties named Vladislav Surkov, is interested solely in the power and independence of the Russian state, and relies on Russian nationalist philosophers like Yevgeny Trubetskoy and Ivan Ilyin. In 2005, Surkov gave a secret speech to a business group called "How Russia Should Fight International Conspiracies," in which he proposed an ideology of "sovereign democracy." The term was meant to insist that democracy comes in many forms, and that "Russian democracy" will develop in its own way and at its own pace. Russia, Surkov says in his speeches, must see through Western hypocrisy: "They tell us about democracy while all the time they are thinking about our hydrocarbons."

Each morning at the Other Russia's July conference at the Holiday Inn, the delegates were greeted by one of Surkov's creations. Members of a pro-Putin youth group, Molodaya Gvardia—the Young Guard, a name reminiscent of Soviet times—staged demonstrations mocking Kasparov and his comrades. The Young Guard is the youth branch of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party.

After the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, two years ago, Putin's Kremlin, led by Surkov, orchestrated the creation of a series of youth organizations modelled on the Soviet-era Komsomol. The largest of them, with ten thousand active members and capable of delivering a hundred thousand to its events, is called Nashi, or Ours. Nashi, like the Komsomol, organizes volunteer work and urges young people to quit smoking and drinking. But it also has a core of activists whose specialty is to harass the opposition. One of the questions on Nashi's entrance exam for its summer camp was to describe Garry Kasparov. The "correct" answer was that he is an American citizen who has taken an oath of loyalty to undermine Russia in the name of the State Department. "Nashi was created, first and foremost, for disturbing our activities," Kasparov said.



The demonstration in front of the Holiday Inn was made up of no more than fifty people, who wore red T-shirts and baseball caps and chanted, "Kasparov, Iyuda!" ("Kasparov is Judas!"). They threw fake American currency—thirty-dollar bills—and shouted slogans about "political prostitutes." A small brass band played ironical funeral tunes.

At the Other Russia's major rallies earlier this year, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the kids from Nashi and the Young Guard were joined by thousands of anti-terrorism and anti-riot troops. Hours after the rally in Moscow, television news covered the event only as a way to imply that it had been bankrolled by the U.S. State Department. That night, state television broadcast a French documentary, "Revolution.com," which seeks to portray the influence of American nongovernmental organizations in planning and financing the revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Serbia. The Russian audience did not know (until the story came out in the daily newspaper *Kommersant*) that six of the film's original fifty-four minutes had been cut; television officials had excised any criticism of Putin and the description of Nashi as a "secret anti-revolutionary ministry." Kasparov has all but disappeared from state television. "And when I do appear," he said, "they try to make a fool of me. Usually, they make sure to show me speaking English. That way, I seem like an alien, a tool of the foreigners."

The first session of the Other Russia conference was a routine recitation of reports about the state of Russia and the state of the Other Russia. The second day's gathering was held in a much larger hall and, along with delegates from many provincial cities, there also seemed to be several young men brazenly filming the audience, as if to accumulate a dossier. Alexei Kondaurov, a former general in the F.S.B. and now a member of the Duma, said, "I look around at this audience and I think there are people, um, observing us. Unofficially. After all, it's my job to know this."

It was a diverse conference, with environmentalists, liberals, human-rights activists, and, most of all, neo-Bolsheviks. In the parlance of today's Russia, a liberal (like Kasparov) tends to emphasize legal rights, democratic procedure, a transparent market economy, and civil society. The neo-Bolsheviks, whose principal leader is the novelist and opposition figure Eduard Limonov, emphasize social rights and guarantees: pensions, salaries, eliminating the gap between the wealthy and the poor. The leftists outnumbered the liberal democrats, who were discredited by the failures of the nineties. "If there were free and fair elections, we would have our own version of Hamas being elected in Palestine," Ilya Ponomaryov, a left-wing economist and a member of the opposition, said. "I think that what we would get in really open elections is either left-wing forces or nationalists."

Kasparov has chosen to join forces with the leftists—even leftists like Limonov, who, in the past, has made common cause with neo-Fascists and anti-Semites—in the name of creating genuine elections and democratic procedures. "It was Garry Kasparov who introduced the notion of a consensus and a united front, even though our ideological differences are very serious," Andrei Dmitriyev, a National Bolshevik Party leader from St. Petersburg, said.

Limonov is, at best, a problematic partner for Kasparov. In the seventies, he immigrated to the United States and modelled himself on Charles Bukowski—as dissolute in his prose as in his daily life. In his autobiographical novel, "It's Me, Eddie," contempt and self-pity are the prevailing emotions. He describes himself bumming off the American welfare system, taking women up to his residential hotel, disdaining his new countrymen ("because you lead dull lives, sell yourselves into the slavery of work, because of your vulgar plaid pants"), and drinking. Solzhenitsyn called him "a little insect who writes pornography." In middle age, Limonov refashioned himself as a man of action and went to Bosnia, where he befriended the accused war criminal Radovan Karadzic. Returning to Russia in 1994, he founded the National Bolshevik Party. It was hard to know how seriously to take him. He recommended the Gulag for Russian liberals. He bought guns. He started an N.B.P. newspaper called *Limonka*, a pun on his name and the slang for "hand grenade." Finally, in 2001, he was arrested for buying arms illegally and was imprisoned for more than two years. Limonov has softened his rhetoric since his release and, in Kasparov's presence, he presents himself as a benign social democrat.

When we spoke during one of the breaks, Limonov told me, "This is a natural alliance to me. Look at the anti-Pinochet coalition or the situation in Russia before the Revolution. There was a range from the Bolsheviks to the bourgeois parties. So in exceptional situations it is natural for many different political forces to get together."

Kasparov thinks that the liberals who keep their distance from Limonov are repeating a mistake of the early nineties. "You have to work with the people who live here," he said. "We're not trying to win elections yet. It's all about having elections, real elections."

One speaker after another came to the dais to offer a diagnosis of the Kremlin and its abuses. The Army was in ruins. The F.S.B. was omnipotent. The elections were a fraud. The economy was described alternately as a "kleptocracy," "a gigantic laundering operation," "a cartel," "a brigade," and "Saudi Arabia without Islam."

Vladimir Bukovsky, a former political prisoner, gave a calm, stirring speech denouncing Putin's "new Chekist regime." Once again, he said, elections in Russia were a fraudulent formality, individual freedoms had been eliminated, and "a small Caucasian nation"—Chechnya—had been destroyed. "There are no citizens, there are subjects." Bukovsky reminded everyone that it was important to unite in opposition to the Kremlin. When he was in a Soviet prison, he said, "we didn't believe in a left opposition or a right opposition. We didn't think about people's beliefs. We all ate from the same bowl."

The speech underscored the plight of opposition politics in Russia today: Bukovsky was not in the hall. Although he was one of several who had been proposed to run against Putin for the Presidency, he has lived in Cambridge, England, since his release from the camps, in 1976. His speech had been videotaped in his English garden.

The other potential candidates for President had their own problems. Viktor Gerashchenko, the former head of the state banking system, had extensive experience in the domestic economy, but he was an apparatchik. Mikhail Kasyanov, the former Prime Minister, is younger and less dour than Gerashchenko, but he acquired the nickname Misha Two Per Cent, for the alleged "tax" he levied on all deals crossing his desk when he worked in the finance ministry.

If one speaker had moral authority, it was Sergei Kovalyov, a biologist and former political prisoner. Now in his late seventies, Kovalyov wearily stepped to the microphone and informed the delegates that victory in the coming elections was impossible "without the approval of the Kremlin."

"So what do we do?" he said. "A critical mass has to be built. Not too many people understand that democracy is dull, scrupulous work. . . . If there is no chance at all to win the elections, then the danger of participating in the elections is that it becomes a trap, a trick for government propaganda. . . . But what a real candidate can do is speak the truth about the regime to a maximum number of people."

The trouble with Gerashchenko or Kasyanov, he said, is that they are "former *nomenklatura*" and they will have to spend the campaign answering for past sins. Bukovsky was "a gifted politician beloved by the dissidents of my generation," Kovalyov said, but then added, with uncharacteristic sarcasm, "A candidate for President has to actually live in the country that he proposes to lead."

At the end of the session, Kasparov invited questions from the floor. One woman, saying that she was a reporter for a business paper that no one seemed to recognize, suddenly started ranting at Kasparov, threw a cloud of thirty-dollar bills at him, and declared him an American agent. She was one of the demonstrators from the Young Guard. Kasparov was unflustered. "You know, I was getting disappointed," he said, by way of adjourning. "I thought they had forgotten about us completely."

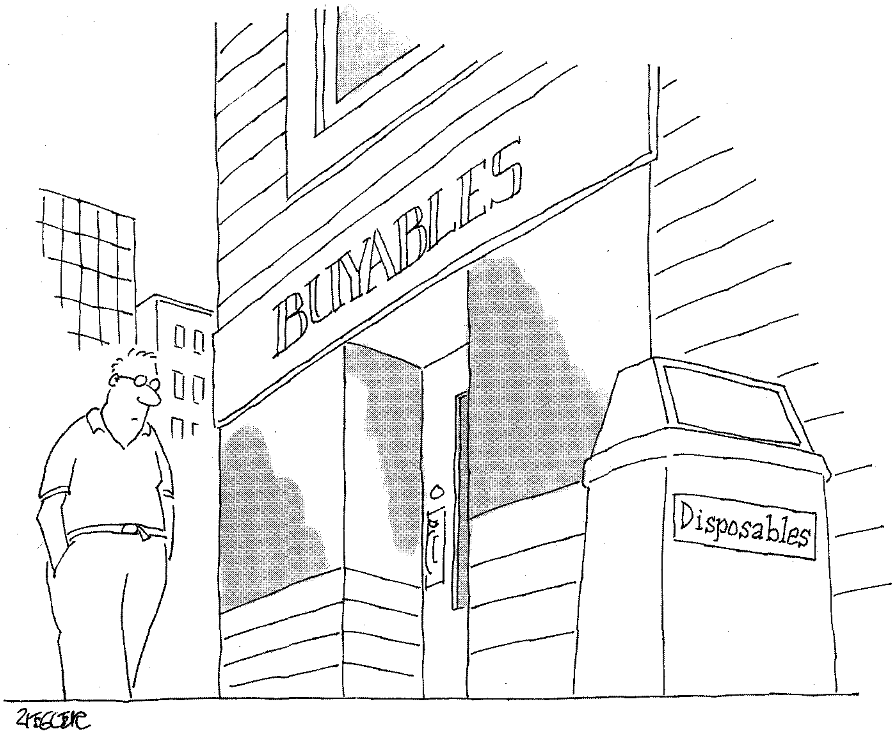
Afterward, Kasparov, Limonov, and Andrei Illarionov, the most prominent of the liberal economists who once worked under Putin, left the hotel and drove to the downtown studios of the radio station Echo of Moscow. Kasparov and Limonov appeared first on a popular talk show hosted by the journalist and professor Yevgenia Albats. It had been a day of long speeches and internecine squabbles, and the overwhelming feeling was that opposition in Putin's Russia was, if not entirely futile, then close to it. A supportive caller from the provincial city of Orenburg brought a smile to Kasparov's face, but he was prepared to claim only small victories.

"We began as an absolutely hopeless movement," he said. "Now we're in the game."

Even that was bold.

In the hallway, Illarionov told me that it would be a disaster to take part in the

March elections. The opposition would be crushed and coöpted. "Garry has invested his energies and his day-to-day life in this, and I respect him very much," he said. "But this is a mistake and will lead millions of people into a dead end." His fear ran deeper than mere defeat. As a tsar, he said, "Putin reacts traditionally. And, if they have no real enemies, they create them. They need enemies. They cannot live without enemies. If all enemies are destroyed, then there is Yabloko, the Republican Party, the Right Forces, the Other Russia—they'll finish these enemies. It's a natural law of dictatorship." The best that Kasparov could do, in the short term, was to establish the idea of an opposition in the narrow margins provided by the state.



As the summer wore on, however, it became clear even to Kasparov that the Other Russia could only put forward a "parallel" candidate, a symbolic one. At first, Kasparov was reluctant to be that candidate, but when he proceeded to win many of the Other Russia's regional primaries in August and September he began to change his mind. "It seems I have no choice," he said.

"The problem is, we are short of resources and we have too little time to create powerful momentum to overthrow the regime," Kasparov went on. "But we do want to show that this regime is violating our basic constitutional rights. We want to use the campaign to publicize our ideas and tell the public that we are here. What we're saying is, we won't win now, but, when this regime collapses, be aware that we are here."

One summer evening, I took the metro to my old stop, Oktybrskaya, where the familiar bronze statue of Lenin, pointing to the remote "shining future," still stood. As I walked along the boulevard called Bolshaya Polyanka, I could see the House on the Embankment, a vast gray Constructivist pile that had accommodated much of the Communist Party's political and cultural élite in Stalin's day. During the purge of 1937, a third of the building's residents were arrested and dispatched either to the Gulag or to the cemetery with a shot in the back of the head. A gigantic Mercedes emblem now rotates alluringly on the roof of the House on the Embankment.

After a while, I arrived at the October Chess Club, the most popular club in the city. Situated in a long basement room, the club was filling up with men and women of all ages taking their places at scruffy boards. International grand masters occasionally come for a game, but the players were the regulars, the enthusiasts. They were, in some cases, a peculiar lot. Alexander Pachulia, a plump and friendly teacher who is the deputy director of the club, told me, "Usually, chess people are not very attached to their regular careers. They are almost uninterested in anything other than chess. If we didn't close up at ten, people would play until ten in the morning and die of hunger right in their chair." The club is open year-round except for New Year's Day and the Orthodox Christmas and Easter.

After the collapse of the Soviet system—and, with it, the subsidized Soviet chess system—many players pursued their careers abroad. As players from the former Soviet Union started showing up at tournaments under new flags, he said, "there was a feeling of loss." Like several other denizens of the club, Pachulia acknowledged Kasparov's genius as a player but was cool to him as a person and as a politician. "I rooted for Kasparov against Karpov in the eighties because of Kasparov's anti-Communism and Karpov stood for Soviet power," Pachulia went on. "But now we live in a different world. We need to be more assertive in the world. If NATO includes Ukraine and Georgia and other states on our border developing so-called democracy, that tells us that you"—the United States—"are putting arms on our borders. Democracy! Nonsense!"

Pachulia, like the majority of Russians, would prefer to see Putin remain President for at least another four years. To elect anyone else, he said, even one of Putin's handpicked protégés, would be a risk that the country could ill afford. "Russia is gigantic and needs a strong hand," he said. Kasparov's politics and language were too foreign, and it made the players at the club dubious not only about his capacities as a politician but even about his loyalty to the Russian state. "The West needs someone to run Russia for them, someone to order around as their instrument, and they want to do that with Garry Kasparov," Pachulia said. "The West is worried about the strength of Vladimir Putin." ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
Garry Kasparov talks to David Remnick.

FICTION

THE INSUFFERABLE GAUCHO

BY ROBERTO BOLAÑO

In the opinion of those who knew him well, Héctor Pereda had two outstanding virtues: he was a caring and affectionate father and an irreproachable lawyer with a record of honesty, in a time and place that were hardly conducive to such rectitude. As evidence of the first virtue, his son and daughter, Bebe and Cuca, whose childhood and adolescent years had been happy, later accused him of having sheltered them from the hard realities of life, focussing particularly on his handling of practical matters. Of his work as a lawyer, there is little to be said. He prospered and made more friends than enemies, which was no mean feat, and when he had the choice between becoming a judge or a candidate for a political party he chose the bench without hesitation, although it obviously meant passing up the opportunities for greater financial gain that would have been open to him in politics.

After three years, however, disappointed by his judicial career, he gave up public life and spent some time, perhaps even years, reading and travelling. Naturally, there was also a Mrs. Pereda, née Hirschmann, with whom the lawyer was, as they say, madly in love. There are photos from that era to prove it: in one of them, Pereda, in a black suit, is dancing a tango with a blond woman, almost platinum blond, who is looking at the camera and smiling while the lawyer's eyes remain fixed on her, like the eyes of a sleepwalker or a lamb. Unfortunately, Mrs. Pereda died suddenly, when Cuca was five and Bebe was seven. The young widower never remarried, although there were various women in his social circle with whom he was known to be on friendly (never intimate) terms, and who, moreover, had all the qualities required to become the new Mrs. Pereda.

When the lawyer's two or three close friends asked him why he remained single, his response was always that he didn't want to impose the unbearable burden (as he put it) of a stepmother on his offspring. In Pereda's opinion, most of Argentina's recent problems could be traced to the figure of the stepmother. We never had a mother, as a nation, he would say; or, she was never there; or, she left us on the doorstep of the orphanage. But we've had plenty of stepmothers, all sorts, starting with the great Peronist stepmother. And he would conclude: Of all the countries in Latin America, we're the experts on stepmothers.

CHRISTIAN NORTHEAST

In spite of everything, his life was happy. It's hard not to be happy, he used to say, in Buenos Aires, which is a perfect blend of Paris and Berlin, although if you look closely it's more like a perfect blend of Lyons and Prague. Every day, he got up at the same time as his children, had breakfast with them, and dropped them off at school. He spent the rest of the morning reading at least two newspapers; and, after a snack at eleven (consisting basically of cold cuts and sausage on buttered French bread and two or three little glasses of Argentine or Chilean wine, except on special occasions, when the wine was, naturally, French), he took a siesta until one. His lunch, which he ate on his own in an enormous, empty dining room while reading a book under the absentminded gaze of the elderly maid, and the black-and-white gaze of his deceased wife looking out from photographs in ornate silver frames, was light: soup and a small portion of fish and mashed potatoes, some of which he would allow to go cold. In the afternoon, he helped his children with their homework, or sat through Cuca's piano lessons in silence, or Bebe's English and French classes, given by two teachers with Italian surnames, who came to the house. Sometimes, when Cuca had learned to play a whole piece, the maid and the cook would come to listen, too, and the lawyer, filled with pride, would hear them murmur words of praise, which struck him at first as excessive, but then, on reflection, seemed perfectly apt. After saying good night to his children and reminding his domestic staff for the umpteenth time not to open the door to anyone, he went to his favorite café, on Corrientes, where he would stay until one at the very latest, listening to his friends or friends of theirs discussing issues that he suspected he would find supremely boring if he knew anything about them, after which he went back home, where everyone was asleep.

Eventually, the children grew up. First Cuca got married and went to live in Rio de Janeiro; then Bebe started writing and indeed became a highly successful writer, which was a source of great pride to Pereda, who read each and every word his son published. Bebe went on living at home for a few more years (where else could he have had it so good?), after which, like his sister, he flew the nest.

At first, the lawyer tried to resign himself to solitude. He had an affair with a widow, went on a long trip through France and Italy, met a girl named Rebeca, and finally contented himself with organizing his huge, chaotic library. When Bebe came back from the United States, where he had spent a year teaching at a university, Pereda had aged prematurely. Bebe was worried and tried not to leave his father alone too much, so sometimes they went to the movies or the theatre, where the lawyer would usually fall into a deep sleep, and sometimes Bebe dragged him along to the literary gatherings that were held at the Black Pencil Café, where authors, basking in the glory of some municipal prize, held forth at length on the nation's destiny. When they talked about literature, Pereda was completely bored. In his opinion, the best Argentine writers were Borges and Bebe; any further commentary on the subject was superfluous. But when they started talking about national and international politics, the lawyer's body grew tense, as if charged by an electric current. From then on, his daily habits changed. He began to get up early and look through the old books in his library, searching for something, though he couldn't have said what. He decided to give up wine and heavy meals, because he realized that they were dulling his intellect. His personal hygiene also underwent a change. He no longer spruced himself up when he was going out. He soon stopped taking a daily shower, and even went to the park to read the paper without putting on a tie. His old friends hardly recognized this new Pereda as the lawyer they had known, who had been irreproachable in every respect. One day he woke up feeling more nervous than usual. He had lunch with a retired judge and a retired journalist, and laughed all the way through the meal. Afterward, as they were drinking Cognac, the judge asked him what he found so funny. Buenos Aires is collapsing, Pereda replied. The journalist thought that the lawyer had gone crazy and recommended some time by the sea, that invigorating air.

The judge, less given to speculation, simply thought that Pereda had gone off on a tangent.

A few days later, however, the Argentine economy went into meltdown. Accounts in American dollars were frozen, and those who hadn't moved their capital (or their savings) offshore suddenly discovered that they had nothing left, or only a few bonds and bank bills the mere sight of which was enough to give them goosebumps, vague promises inspired in equal parts by some forgotten tango and the words of the national anthem. I told you so, the lawyer said to anyone willing to listen. Then, accompanied by his cook and his maid, he stood in long lines, like many other inhabitants of Buenos Aires, and entered into long conversations with strangers (who struck him as utterly charming) in streets thronged with people swindled by the government or the banks, or whomever.

When the President resigned, Pereda was there among the protesters as they banged their pots and pans. Sometimes it seemed as if the elderly had taken control of the streets, old people of all social classes, and he liked that, although he didn't know why; it seemed like a sign that something was changing, that something was moving in the darkness, although he was also happy to join in the wildcat strikes and blockades that quickly degenerated into brawling. In the space of a few days, Argentina had three different Presidents. It didn't occur to anyone to start a revolution or mount a military coup. That was when Pereda decided to go back to the country.

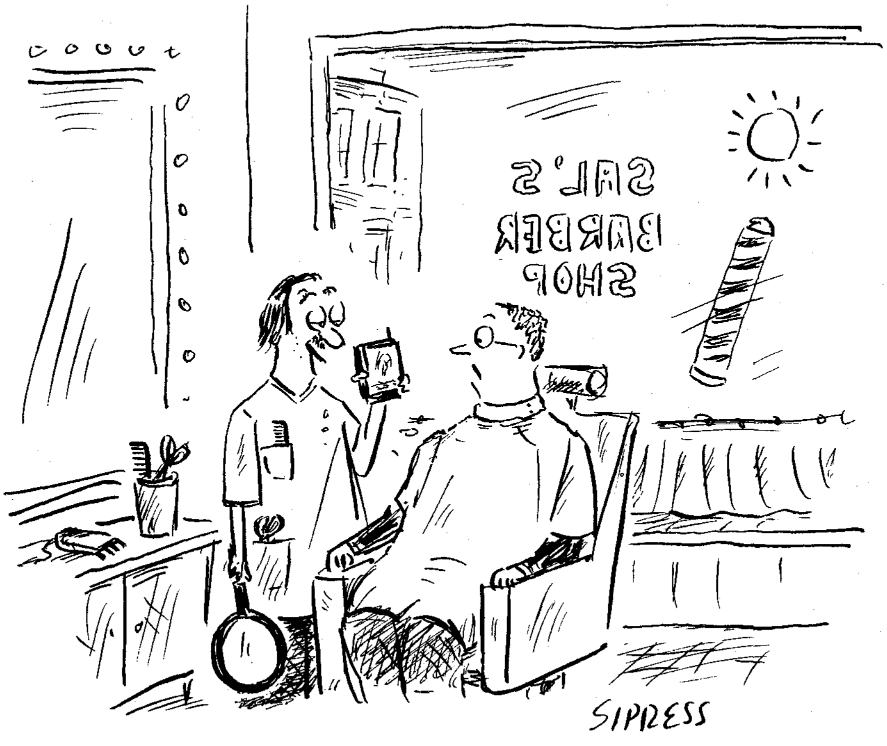
Before leaving, he explained his plan to the maid and the cook. Buenos Aires is falling apart; I'm going to the ranch, he said. They talked for hours, sitting at the kitchen table. The cook had been to the ranch as often as Pereda, who had always said that the country was no place for a man like him, a cultivated family man, who wanted to make sure that his children got a good education. His mental images of the ranch had blurred and faded, leaving only a house with a hole in the middle, an enormous, threatening tree, and a barn flickering with shadows that might have been rats. Nevertheless, that night, as he drank tea in the kitchen, he told his employees that he had hardly any money left to pay them (it was all frozen in the bank—in other words, as good as lost) and the only solution he had come up with was to take them to the country, where at least they wouldn't be short of food, or so he hoped.

The maid and the cook listened to him compassionately. At one point, the lawyer burst into tears. Trying to console him, they told him not to worry about the money; they were prepared to go on working even if he couldn't pay them. The lawyer definitively rejected any such arrangement. I'm too old to become a pimp, he said with an apologetic smile. The next morning, he packed a suitcase and took a taxi to the station. The women waved goodbye from the sidewalk.

The long, monotonous train trip gave him ample time for reflection. At first, the carriage was full. He observed that there were basically two topics of conversation: the country's state of bankruptcy and how the Argentine team was shaping up for the World Cup in Korea and Japan. The press of passengers reminded him of the trains departing from Moscow in the film "Doctor Zhivago," which he had seen some time ago, except that in the Russian carriages as filmed by that English director the talk had not been about ice hockey or skiing. What hope have we got, he thought, although he had to agree that on paper the Argentine selection looked unbeatable. When night fell, the conversations stopped, and the lawyer thought of his children, Cuca and Bebe, both of whom were abroad. He also thought of a number of women he had known intimately but had not expected to remember; silently, they emerged from oblivion, their skin covered with sweat, infusing his restless spirit with something like serenity, although it wasn't altogether serene, perhaps not exactly a sense of adventure, but something like that.

Then the train began to advance over the pampas, and the lawyer leaned his head against the cold glass of the window and fell asleep.

When he woke, the carriage was half empty and there was a man who looked part Indian sitting beside him, reading a Batman comic book. Where are we? Pereda asked. In Coronel Gutiérrez, the man said. Ah, that's all right, the lawyer thought, I'm going to Capitán Jourdan. Then he got up, stretched his legs, and sat down again. Out on the dry plain he saw a rabbit that seemed to be racing the train. There were five other rabbits running behind it. The first rabbit, running just outside the window, had wide-open eyes, as if the race against the train required a superhuman effort (or, rather, super-leporine, the lawyer

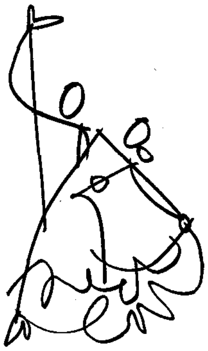


"Would you like to see the top on Google Earth?"

thought). The rabbits in pursuit seemed to be running in tandem, like cyclists in the Tour de France. With a couple of big leaps, the rabbit bringing up the rear relieved the front-runner, which dropped back to last position, while the third rabbit moved up to second place, and the fourth moved up to third; and all the while the group was closing in on the solitary rabbit running beside the lawyer's window. Rabbits, he thought, how wonderful! On the plains, there was nothing else to be seen: a vast, boundless expanse of scant grass under massive, low clouds, and no indication that a town might be near. Are you going to Capitán Jourdan? Pereda asked the Batman reader, who seemed to be examining every panel with extreme care, scrutinizing every detail, as if he were visiting a portable museum. No, he replied, I'm getting off at El Apeadero. Pereda tried to remember a station of that name but couldn't. And what's that, a station or a factory? The Indian-looking guy stared back at him fixedly: A station, he replied. He seems annoyed, Pereda thought. It wasn't the sort of question he would normally have asked, given his habitual discretion. The pampas had made him inquire in that frank, manly, and down-to-earth way, he decided.

When he rested his forehead against the window again, he saw that the rabbits in pursuit had caught up with the lone racing rabbit, and were attacking it ferociously, tearing at its body with their claws and teeth—those long rodents' teeth, Pereda thought with a horrified frisson. He looked back and saw an amorphous mass of tawny fur rolling beside the rails.

The only passengers who got off at Capitán Jourdan were Pereda and a woman with two children. The platform was half wood, half concrete, and in spite of his best efforts Pereda couldn't find a railway employee anywhere. The woman and the children set off walking on a cart track, and although they were clearly moving away and their figures were visibly shrinking, it took more than three-quarters of an hour, by the lawyer's reckoning, for them to disappear from the horizon. Is the earth round? Pereda wondered. Of course it is, he told himself, sitting down on an old wooden bench against the wall of the station, preparing to kill some time. Inevitably, he remembered Borges's story "The South," and when he thought of the store mentioned in the final paragraphs his eyes brimmed with tears. Then he remembered the plot of Bebe's last novel, and imagined his son writing on a computer, in an austere room at a Midwestern university. When Bebe comes back and finds out I've gone to the ranch…, he thought in enthusiastic anticipation. The glare and the warm breeze gusting off the plain made him drowsy; he fell asleep. A hand shook him awake. A man as old as he was, wearing an old railway uniform, asked him what he was doing there. Pereda said he was the owner of the Álamo Negro ranch. The man stood there looking at him for a while, then said, The judge. That's right, Pereda replied, there was a time when I was a judge. Don't you remember me, Mr. Judge? Pereda scrutinized the man: he needed a new uniform and a haircut, urgently. Pereda shook his head. I'm Severo Infante, the man said. We used to play together when we were kids. But, *che*, that's ages ago—how could I remember, Pereda retorted, and his voice, not to mention the words he had used, sounded odd, as if the air of Capitán Jourdan had invigorated his vocal cords or his throat.



Of course, you're right, Mr. Judge, Severo Infante said, but I feel like celebrating anyway. Bouncing like a kangaroo, the station employee disappeared into the ticket office, then came out with a bottle and a glass. Your health, he said, handing Pereda the glass, which he half filled with a clear liquid that seemed to be pure alcohol. Pereda took a sip—it tasted of scorched earth and stones—and left the glass on the bench. He said that he had given up drinking. Then he got up and asked the way to his ranch. They went out the back door. Capitán Jourdan is over there, Severo said, just beyond the dry pond. Álamo Negro is the other way, a bit farther, but you can't get lost in the daylight. You look after yourself, Pereda said, and set off in the direction of his ranch.

The main house was almost in ruins. That night it was cold, and Pereda tried to gather some sticks and light a campfire, but he couldn't find anything to burn, and in the end he wrapped himself up in his overcoat, rested his head on his suitcase, and fell asleep, telling himself that tomorrow would be another day. He woke with the first light of dawn. The well still had water in it, although the bucket had disappeared and the rope was rotten. I need to buy a rope and a bucket, he thought. For breakfast, he ate what was left of a packet of peanuts he had bought on the train. He inspected the multitudinous low-ceilinged rooms of the ranch house. Then he set off for Capitán Jourdan, and was surprised to see rabbits but no cattle on the way. He observed them uneasily. Occasionally, they would hop toward him, but he had only to wave his arms to make them disappear. Although he had never been particularly keen on guns, he would have been glad of one then. Apart from that, the walk did him good: the air was fresh, the sky was clear; it was neither hot nor cold. From time to time he spotted a tree all alone out on the plain, and the vision struck him as poetic, as if the tree and the scenery of the deserted countryside had been arranged just for him and had been awaiting his arrival with an imperturbable patience.

None of the roads in Capitán Jourdan were paved, and the housefronts were thickly coated with dust. As he entered the town, he saw a man asleep beside some flowerpots containing plastic flowers. My God, what a dump! he thought. The main square was broad, and the town hall, built of brick, gave the collection of squat, abandoned buildings a slight air of civilization. He asked a gardener who was sitting in the square smoking a cigarette where he could find a hardware store. The gardener looked at him curiously, then accompanied him to the door of the only hardware store in town. The owner, an Indian, sold him all the rope he had in stock: forty yards of braided hemp, which Pereda examined at length, as if looking for loose threads. Put it on my account, he said. The Indian looked at him, nonplussed. Whose account? he asked. Héctor Pereda's, Pereda said, as he piled up his new possessions in a corner of the store. Then he asked the Indian where he could buy a horse. There are no horses left here, he said, only rabbits. Pereda thought it was a joke and responded with a quick, dry laugh. The gardener, who was looking in from the threshold, said that there might be a strawberry roan to be had at Don Dulce's ranch. Pereda asked him how he could get there, and the gardener walked a couple of blocks with him, to a vacant lot full of rubble. Beyond lay open country.

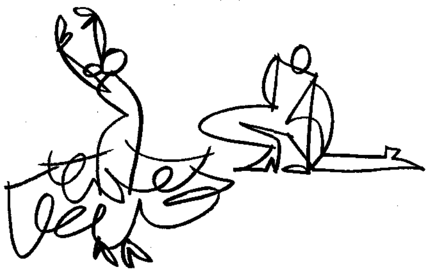
The ranch was called Mi Paraíso, and it didn't seem as run-down as Álamo Negro. A few chickens were pecking around in the yard. The door to the shed had been pulled off its hinges and someone had propped it against a wall nearby. Some Indian-looking kids were playing with bolas. A woman came out of the main house and said good afternoon. Pereda asked her for a glass of water. Between mouthfuls, he asked if there was a horse for sale. You'll have to wait for the boss, the woman said, and went back into the house. Pereda sat down beside the well and kept himself busy brushing away the flies that were buzzing around everywhere, as if the yard were used for pickling meat, Pereda thought, although the only pickles he had encountered were the ones he used to buy many years ago at a store that imported them directly from England. After an hour, he heard the sound of a jeep and stood up.

Don Dulce was a little pink-faced guy, with blue eyes, wearing a short-sleeved shirt, although by the time he arrived it was starting to get cool. An even shorter guy got out of the jeep as well: a gaucho attired in baggy *bombachas* and a diaper-like *chiripá*, who threw Pereda a sidelong glance and started carrying rabbit skins into the shed. Pereda introduced himself. He said he was the owner of Álamo Negro, and that he was planning to do some work on the ranch and needed to buy a horse. Don Dulce invited him to dinner. Around the table sat the host, the woman who had appeared earlier, the children, the gaucho, and Pereda. There was a fire in the hearth, not to heat the room but for grilling meat. The bread was hard and unleavened, the way the Jews make it, Pereda thought, remembering his Jewish wife with a touch of nostalgia. But no one at Mi Paraíso seemed to be Jewish.

When it came to buying the horse, everything went smoothly. Choosing was not a problem, because there was only one horse for sale. When Pereda said he might need a month to pay, Don Dulce made no objection, although the gaucho, who hadn't said a word all through the meal, stared at him warily. Afterward, they saddled the horse, showed him the way, and said goodbye.

How long has it been since I rode a horse? Pereda wondered. For a few seconds he worried that his bones, accustomed to the comfort of Buenos Aires and its armchairs, might break under the strain. The night was dark as pitch or coal. Stupid expressions, thought Pereda. European nights might be pitch-dark or coal-black, but not South American nights, which are dark like a void, where there's nothing to hold on to, no shelter from the elements, just empty, storm-whipped space, above and below. May the rain fall soft on you! he heard Don Dulce shout. God willing, he replied from the darkness.

On the way back to his ranch, he dozed off a couple of times. He woke up from his second nap on one of the streets of Capitán Jourdan. He saw a corner store that was open. He heard voices, and someone strumming a guitar, tuning it but never settling on a particular song to play, just as he had read in Borges. For a moment, he thought that his destiny, his screwed-up American destiny, would be to meet his death like Dahlmann in "The South," and it seemed unfair, partly because he now had debts to repay and partly because he wasn't ready to die, although Pereda knew that death is an occurrence for which one is never ready. Seized by a sudden inspiration, he entered the store on horseback. Inside, he found an old gaucho, strumming the guitar, the owner, and three younger guys sitting at a table, who started when they saw the horse come in. Pereda was inwardly satisfied by the thought that the scene was like something from a story by di Benedetto. Nevertheless, he set his face and approached the zinc-topped bar. He ordered a glass of aguardiente, which he drank with one hand, while in the other he held his riding crop discreetly out of view, since he hadn't yet bought himself the traditional sheath knife. He asked the owner to put the drink on his account, and on his way out, as he passed the young gauchos, he told them to move aside because he was going to spit. This was meant as affirmation of his authority, but before the gauchos could grasp what was happening the gob of phlegm had flown from his lips; they barely had time to jump. May the rain fall soft on you, he said, before disappearing into the darkness of Capitán Jourdan.



From then on, Pereda went into town each day on his horse, which he named José Bianco. He often went to buy tools with which to repair the ranch house, but he also passed the time of day chatting with the gardener, or with the keepers of the general store and the hardware store, whose livelihoods he diminished day by day, as he lengthened the accounts he had with each of them. Other gauchos and storekeepers soon joined in these conversations, and sometimes even children came to hear the stories Pereda told. Naturally, he always cut an impressive figure in those stories, although they weren't exactly cheerful. For example, he told them how he had once owned a horse very like José Bianco, which had been killed in a confrontation with the police. Luckily, I was a judge, he said, and when the police come up against a judge or an ex-judge they usually back off.

Police work's about order, he said, while judges defend justice. Do you see the difference, boys? The gauchos would usually nod, although they weren't at all sure what he was talking about.

Sometimes he went to the station, where his friend Severo would reminisce at length about their childhood pranks. Although Pereda was privately convinced that he couldn't have been as silly as he seemed in those stories, he let Severo talk until he got tired or fell asleep, then walked out onto the platform to wait for the train and the letter it was supposed to bring.

Finally, the letter arrived. In it his cook explained that life was hard in Buenos Aires, but that he shouldn't worry, because both she and the maid were going to the house every two days, and it was in perfect order. As for sending him money, they were looking into it, she assured him; the problem was, they still hadn't found a way to make sure it wouldn't be filched by some racketeer on the way.

In the evening, as he was returning to

LIVING

Just when it seemed my mother couldn't bear

one more needle, one more insane orange pill,
my sister, in silence, stood at the end

of the bed and slowly rubbed her feet,

which were scratchy with hard, yellow skin,
and dirt cramped beneath the broken nails,

which changed nothing in time except

the way my mother was lost in it for a while
as if with a kind of relief that doesn't relieve.

And then, with her eyes closed, my mother said

the one or two words the living have for gratefulness,
which is a kind of forgetting, with a sense

of what it means to be alive long enough

to love someone. *Thank you*, she said. As for me,
I didn't care how her voice suddenly seemed low

and kind, or what failures and triumphs

of the body and spirit brought her to that point—
just that it sounded like hope, stupid hope.

—*Jason Shinder*

Álamo Negro at a gallop, the lawyer could sometimes see a ruined village in the distance that seemed not to have been there before. Sometimes a slender column of smoke rose from the village and dissipated in the vast sky over the plains. Occasionally, he encountered the vehicle in which Don Dulce and his gaucho got around. They would stop to talk and smoke for a while, Don Dulce and the gaucho sitting in their jeep, the lawyer still mounted on José Bianco. Don Dulce was out after rabbits. Pereda once asked him how he hunted them, and Don Dulce told his gaucho to show the lawyer one of the traps, which was halfway between a birdcage and a rat trap. Pereda never saw a single rabbit in the jeep, only the skins, because the gaucho skinned them on the spot, beside the traps. After those chats, Pereda always felt that Don Dulce was somehow diminishing the stature of the nation. Rabbit hunting! What sort of job is that for a gaucho? he asked himself. Then he would give his horse an affectionate pat. Come on, *che*, José Bianco, let's go, he'd say, and head back to the ranch.

One day, the cook turned up. She had brought money for him. She rode behind him on José Bianco halfway from the station to the ranch, then they walked the rest of the way, in silence, contemplating the plain. By this time, the ranch house was more comfortable than it had been when Pereda arrived; they ate rabbit stew, and then by the light of an oil lamp the cook handed over the money she had brought, and explained where it had come from, which objects from the house she had been forced to sell off at a fraction of their value. Pereda didn't even bother to count it. The next morning, when he woke up, he saw that the cook had worked all night cleaning some of the rooms. He reproached her gently. Don Héctor, she said, it's like a pigsty here.

Two days later, in spite of the lawyer's entreaties, she took the train back to Buenos Aires. Away from Buenos Aires I feel like another person, she explained to him as they waited on the platform, just the two of them. And I'm too old to become someone else. Women, they're all the same, Pereda thought. Everything is changing, the cook explained to him. The city was full of beggars, and respectable people were organizing neighborhood soup kitchens just to have something to put into their stomachs. There were at least ten different kinds of currency, not counting the official money. No one was bored. People were desperate, but not bored. As she spoke, Pereda watched the rabbits that had appeared on the other side of the tracks. The rabbits looked at them, then bounded away across the plain. Sometimes it's as if this country were full of lice or fleas, the lawyer thought. With the money the cook had brought, he paid his debts and hired a pair of gauchos to repair the roof of the ranch house, which was falling in. The problem was that although he knew next to nothing about carpentry, that was more than the gauchos knew.

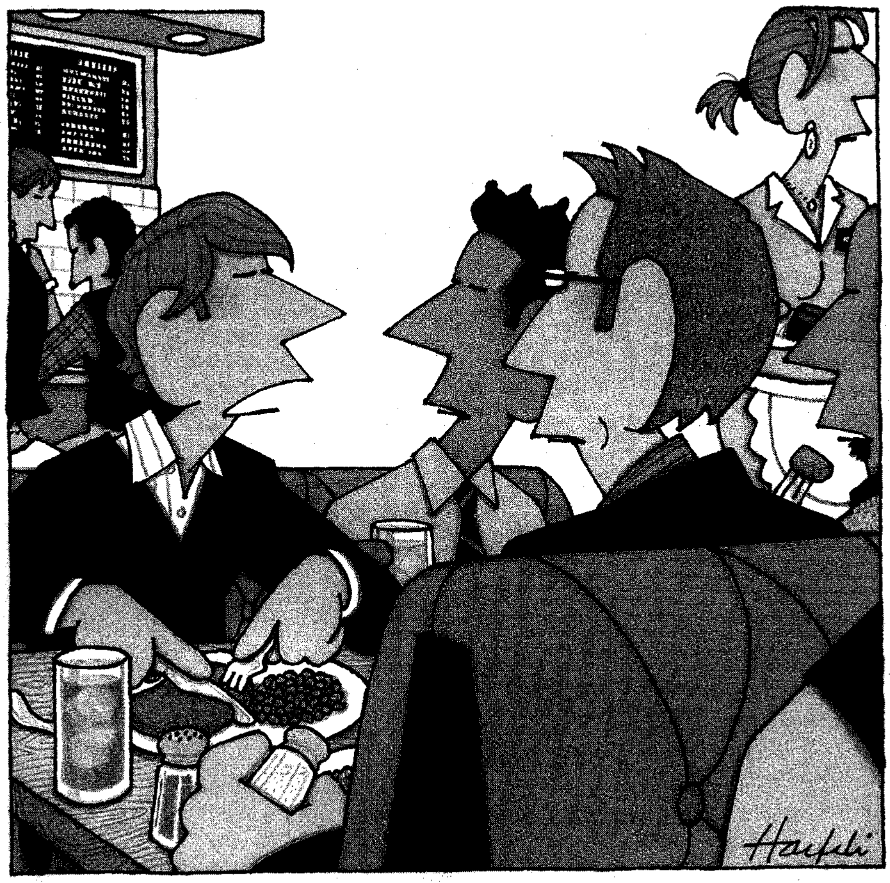
One was called José and must have been around seventy. He didn't have a horse. The other was called Campodónico and was probably younger, although he could also have been older. Both wore the traditional baggy *bombachas*, but their headgear consisted of caps that they had made themselves from rabbit skins. Neither had a family, so after a while they both came to live at Álamo Negro. At night, by the light of a fire out in the open, Pereda whiled away the time recounting adventures that had taken place exclusively in his imagination. He spoke to them of Argentina, Buenos Aires, and the pampas, and he asked them which of the three they would choose. Argentina's a novel, he said, so it's make-believe at best. Buenos Aires is full of crooks and loudmouths, a place like Hell, with nothing going for it except the women, and the writers, some of them, not many, though. But the pampas—the pampas are eternal. A limitless cemetery, that's what it's like. Can you imagine that, boys, a limitless cemetery? The gauchos smiled and confessed that it was actually pretty hard to imagine something like that, since cemeteries are for humans, and although the number of humans is big, there's a limit to it. Ah, but the cemetery I'm talking about, Pereda said, is an exact copy of eternity.

With the money he had left, he went to Coronel Gutiérrez and bought himself a mare and a colt. The mare would let itself be ridden, but the colt was not much use for anything, and had to be treated with extreme caution. Sometimes, in the evening, when he was sick of working or of doing nothing, Pereda went into Capitán Jourdan with his gauchos. He rode José Bianco; the gauchos rode the mare. When he entered the store, a respectful hush fell over the clients. Some were playing cards, others were playing checkers. When the mayor, who was prone to depression, turned up, there would always be four brave volunteers for a game of Monopoly that would last until dawn. This habit of playing games (not to speak of Monopoly) seemed ill-bred and dishonorable to Pereda. A store is a place where people converse or listen in silence to the conversations of others, he thought. A store is like an empty classroom. A store is a smoky church.

Some nights, especially when gauchos from out of town or some disoriented travelling salesman turned up, Pereda felt a powerful desire to start a fight. Nothing serious, just a scrap, but with real knives, not chalked sticks, like kids use. Other nights, he would fall asleep between his two gauchos and dream that his wife was leading their children by the hand and scolding him for the way he had let himself lapse into brutishness. And what about the rest of the country? the lawyer replied. But that's no excuse, *che*, rejoined Mrs. Pereda, née Hirschmann. At which point the lawyer would have to agree, and tears would well up in his eyes.

In general, however, his dreams were peaceful, and when he woke up in the morning he was in good spirits and keen to start work. Although, to tell the truth, not a lot of work was done at Álamo Negro. The repairing of the ranch-house roof was a disaster. In order to start a kitchen garden, the lawyer and Campodónico bought seeds in Coronel Gutiérrez, but the earth, it seemed, would accept no foreign seed. For a time, the lawyer tried to get the colt, which he called "my stud horse," to cover the mare. If the mare had a filly, all the better. That way, he imagined, he could soon build up a breeding stock that would lead the recovery; but the colt didn't seem to be interested in covering the mare and, although he searched for miles around, Pereda couldn't find a sire, since the gauchos had sold their horses to the slaughterhouse, and now got around on foot, or on bicycles, or hitched rides on the endless dirt tracks of the pampas.

We have fallen, we're down, Pereda would say to his audience, but we can still pick ourselves up and go to our deaths like men. He, too, had to set rabbit traps to survive. In the evenings, when he left the house with his men, he would often let José and Campodónico empty the traps, along with a new recruit known as the Old Guy, while he set off alone for the ruined village. There he found some young people, younger than his gauchos, but so disinclined to converse and so nervous that it wasn't even worth inviting them for a meal. Occasionally, he would go to the railway line and spend a long time there waiting for the train to pass, mounted on José Bianco, both of them chewing grass stalks. Often enough, no train would pass, as if that part of Argentina had been erased from memory as well as from the map.



"I want a woman who's not afraid to have a few extra pounds—but doesn't."

One afternoon, as Pereda was vainly attempting to get his colt to mount the mare, he saw a car driving over the plain, coming directly toward Álamo Negro. The car pulled up in the yard, and four men got out. At first, he didn't recognize his son. Nor did Bebe realize that the old man in *bombachas* with a beard, long tangled hair, and a bare chest tanned by the sun was his father. Son of my soul, Pereda said, hugging him, blood of my blood, vindication of my days, and he would have gone on like that if Bebe hadn't stopped him to introduce his friends, two writers from Buenos Aires and the publisher Ibarrola, who loved books and nature, and had financed the trip. In honor of his son's guests, the lawyer had a big bonfire built in the yard that night, and sent for the foremost of Capitán Jourdan's guitar-strumming gauchos, warning him beforehand that he was to do strictly that: strum, without playing any song in particular, in accordance with the country way.

Campodónico and José were dispatched to fetch ten litres of wine and a litre of aguardiente, which they brought back from Capitán Jourdan in the mayor's van. A good stock of rabbits was laid in, and one was roasted for each person present, although the visitors from the city didn't seem particularly keen on rabbit meat. That night, there were more than thirty people gathered around the fire, besides Pereda's gauchos and the guests from Buenos Aires.

By three in the morning, the elders had set off back to Capitán Jourdan, and there were just a few young men left at the ranch, wondering what to do, since the food and drink had run out, and the guys from the city had gone to sleep a while ago. The next morning, Bebe tried to persuade his father to return to Buenos Aires with him. Things are gradually settling down, he said. Personally, he was doing all right. He gave his father a book, one of the many gifts he had brought, and told him that it had been published in Spain. Now I'm a well-known author all through Latin America, he explained. But the lawyer had no idea what his son was talking about. He asked if he was married yet and, when Bebe said no, suggested he find himself an Indian woman and come to live at Álamo Negro.

An Indian woman, Bebe repeated in a tone of voice that the lawyer thought was wistful.

Among the gifts his son had brought was a Beretta 92 pistol with two clips and a box of ammunition. The lawyer looked at the pistol in amazement. Do you honestly think I'm going to need it? he asked. You never know, Bebe said. You're really on your own here. They saddled up the mare for Ibarrola, who wanted to take a look at the countryside, and Pereda, riding José Bianco, spent the rest of the morning showing him around. For two hours, the publisher held forth in praise of the idyllic, unspoiled life led, as he saw it, by the inhabitants of Capitán Jourdan. When he spotted the first of the ruined houses, he broke into a gallop, but it was much farther away than he had thought, and before he got there a rabbit leaped up and bit him on the neck. The publisher's cry vanished at once into the vast open space.

From where he was, all Pereda could see was a dark shape springing from the ground, tracing an arc toward the publisher's head, then disappearing. Dumbass Basque, he thought. He spurred José Bianco, and as he approached he saw that Ibarrola was holding his neck with one hand and covering his face with the other. Without saying a word, Pereda removed the hand from Ibarrola's neck. There was a bleeding scratch under his ear. Pereda asked him if he had a handkerchief. The publisher replied in the affirmative, and only then did Pereda realize that he was crying. Put the handkerchief on the wound, he said. Then he took the mare's reins, and they made their way to the ruined house. There was no one there; they didn't dismount. As they returned to the ranch, the handkerchief that Ibarrola was holding against the wound gradually turned red. They said nothing. When they got back, Pereda ordered his gauchos to strip the publisher to the waist, and they flung him onto a table in the yard. Pereda washed the wound, which he proceeded to cauterize with a knife heated until the blade was red-hot, then made a dressing with another handkerchief, held in place with a makeshift bandage: one of his old shirts, which he soaked in aguardiente, what little was left, more as a ritual than as a sanitary measure, but it couldn't do any harm.

When Bebe and the two writers came back from a walk around Capitán Jourdan, they found Ibarrola unconscious on the table, and Pereda sitting beside him in a chair, observing him intently, like a medical student. Behind Pereda, equally absorbed by the sight of the wounded man, stood the ranch's three gauchos.

The sun was beating down mercilessly in the yard. Son of a bitch! shouted one of Bebe's friends. Your dad's gone and killed our publisher. But the publisher wasn't dead, and made a full recovery, except for the scar, which he would later display with pride, explaining that it had been caused by the bite of a jumping snake.

From then on, there were often visitors from the city. Sometimes Bebe came on his own, with his riding clothes and his notebooks, in which he wrote vaguely melancholy stories with vaguely crime-related plots. Sometimes he would come with luminaries from Buenos Aires, usually writers, but quite often a painter, to Pereda's satisfaction, since painters, for some reason, seemed to know much more about carpentry and bricklaying than the bunch of gauchos who hung around Álamo Negro all day like a bad smell.

On one occasion, Bebe came with a psychiatrist. She was blond and had steely blue eyes and high cheekbones, like an extra from the "Ring" cycle. The only problem with her, Pereda thought, was that she talked a lot. One morning, he invited her to go for a ride. The psychiatrist accepted. He saddled up the mare, mounted José Bianco, and they headed west. As they rode, the psychiatrist told him about her job in a Buenos Aires mental hospital. She told him (and the rabbits that sometimes surreptitiously accompanied the riders) that people were becoming more and more unbalanced: studies had proved it, which led the psychiatrist to conjecture that perhaps mental instability was not so much a disease as a stratum of normality, just below the surface of normality as it was commonly conceived. All this sounded like Chinese to Pereda, but, intimidated as he was by the beauty of his son's guest, he refrained from saying so. At midday, they stopped for a lunch of rabbit jerky and wine. The wine and the meat, a dark meat that shone like alabaster when touched by light and seemed to be literally seething with protein, brought out the psychiatrist's poetic streak, and, as Pereda noticed out of the corner of his eye, prompted her to let her hair down.

At about five in the afternoon, they spotted the shell of a ranch house on the horizon. Excited, they spurred their mounts in that direction, but at six they were still not there, which led the psychiatrist to remark on how deceptive distances could be. When they finally arrived, five or six malnourished children came out to greet them, along with a woman wearing a very wide skirt that bulged voluminously, as if there were some kind of animal under it coiled around her legs. The children kept their eyes fixed on the psychiatrist, who adopted a maternal attitude, though not for long, since she soon noticed, as she later explained to Pereda, a malevolent intention in their gaze, a mischievous plan formulated, so she felt, in a language full of consonants, shrieks, and resentment.

Pereda, who was coming to the conclusion that the psychiatrist was not entirely in her right mind, accepted the skirted woman's invitation to dinner, and during the meal, which they ate in a room full of old photographs, learned that the owners of the ranch had gone off to the city a long time ago (the woman couldn't say which city) and the laborers, having ceased to receive their monthly pay, had gradually drifted away, too. The woman also told them about a river and flooding, although Pereda had no idea where the river could be, and no one in Capitán Jourdan had mentioned any kind of flood. Predictably, they ate rabbit stew, which their hostess had prepared with an expert hand. As they were getting ready to go, Pereda pointed out the way to Álamo Negro, his ranch, in case they ever got tired of living out there. I don't pay much, but at least there's company, he said seriously, as if explaining that death came after life. Then he gathered the children around him and proceeded to dispense advice. When he had finished speaking, he saw that the psychiatrist and the skirted woman had fallen asleep on their chairs.

Day was about to break when Pereda and the psychiatrist left. The light of a full moon shimmered on the plain, and from time to time they saw a rabbit jump, but Pereda paid no attention, and after a long spell of silence he softly began to sing a song in French that his late wife had liked.

The song was about a pier and mist, and unfaithful lovers, as all lovers are in the end, he thought indulgently, and places that remain utterly faithful.

Sometimes, as he walked or rode José Bianco around the dubious boundaries of his ranch, Pereda thought that nothing would ever be the same unless the cattle returned. Cows, where are you? he shouted.

In winter, the skirted woman turned up at Álamo Negro with the children in tow. Some people in Capitán Jourdan knew her and were pleased to see her again. The woman didn't talk much, but she certainly worked harder than the six gauchos Pereda now had on the payroll, to use the expression liberally, since he often went for months without paying them. And, indeed, some of the gauchos had what could be called an idiosyncratic concept of time. They could adapt to a forty-day month without any major headaches. Or to a four-hundred-and-forty-day year. None of them, in fact, Pereda included, wanted to think about time. By the fireside, some of the gauchos talked about electroshock therapy, while others spoke like professional sports commentators, except that they were commenting on a match played long ago, when they were twenty or thirty and belonged to some gang of hooligans. Sons of bitches, Pereda thought tenderly, with a manly sort of tenderness, of course.

One night, he asked them about their political opinions. At first the gauchos were reluctant to talk about politics, but when he finally got them to open up it turned out that, in one way or another, they were all nostalgic for General Perón.

This is where we part company, Pereda said, and pulled out his knife. For a few seconds he thought that the gauchos would do the same and his destiny would be sealed that night, but the old guys recoiled in fear and asked what he was doing, for God's sake. What had they done? What had got into him? The flickering fire threw tigerlike stripes of light across their faces, but as he gripped his knife, trembling, Pereda felt that Argentina's shame or the shame of Latin America had turned them into tame cats. That's why the cattle have been replaced by rabbits, he thought as he turned around and walked back to his room.

I'd slaughter the lot of you if you weren't so pathetic! he shouted.

The next morning, he was afraid that the gauchos might have gone back to Capitán Jourdan, but they were all still there, working in the yard or drinking maté by the fire, as if nothing had happened. A few days later, the skirted woman arrived from the ranch out west and Álamo Negro began to change for the better, starting with the food, because the woman knew ten different ways to cook a rabbit, where to find herbs, how to start a kitchen garden and grow some fresh vegetables.

One night the woman walked along the veranda and went into Pereda's room. She was wearing only a petticoat; the lawyer made space for her in his bed, and spent the rest of the night looking up at the canopy, feeling that warm and unfamiliar body against his ribs. Day was breaking by the time he fell asleep, and when he woke up the woman was gone. Got yourself shacked up, Bebe said when his father informed him. Only technically, the lawyer pointed out. By that stage, with money borrowed here and there, he had been able to enlarge the stables and acquire four cows. When he was bored in the afternoons, he would saddle up José Bianco and take the cows out for a walk. The rabbits, who had never seen a cow, stared in amazement.

It seemed that Pereda and the cows were bound for the end of the world, but they had just gone out for a walk.

He spoke to the gauchos gathered in the general store one evening. I believe we are losing our memory, he said. And about time, too. For once, the gauchos looked at him as if they grasped the significance of his words even better than he did himself. Shortly afterward, he received a letter from Bebe summoning him to Buenos Aires in order to sign some papers so that his house could be sold. What should I do, Pereda wondered, take the train or ride? That night he could hardly sleep. He imagined people thronging the sidewalks as he made his entry mounted on José Bianco. His entry into Buenos Aires, as he imagined it, had the ambience of Christ's entry into Jerusalem or Brussels as depicted by Ensor. All of us make our entry into Jerusalem sooner or later, he thought as he tossed and turned. Every single one of us. And some never come out again. But most do. And then we are seized and crucified. Especially poor gauchos.

He also imagined a downtown street, the quintessential Buenos Aires street, with all the charms of the capital; he was riding along it on his trusty José Bianco, while from the windows above white flowers began to rain down. Who was throwing the flowers? He couldn't tell, since, like the street itself, the windows of the buildings remained empty. It must be the dead, Pereda supposed drowsily. The dead of Jerusalem and the dead of Buenos Aires.

The next morning, he spoke with the gauchos and told them that he would be away for a while. None of them said anything, although that night at dinner the skirted woman asked if he was going to

Buenos Aires. Pereda nodded. Then take care and may the rain fall soft on you, the woman said.

Two days later, he took the train and went back the way he had come more than three years before. When he arrived at Constitución Station, a few people stared as if he were wearing fancy dress, but most were not particularly perturbed by an old man attired like a cross between a gaucho and a rabbit trapper. The taxi-driver who took him to his house inquired where he was from, and when Pereda, lost in his own ruminations, failed to answer, he asked if he spoke Spanish. By way of reply, Pereda pulled out his knife and proceeded to cut his nails, which were as long as a wild cat's.

No one answered the door. The keys were under the mat; he went in. The house seemed clean, perhaps too clean—it smelled of mothballs. Feeling exhausted, Pereda trudged to his bedroom and flopped onto the bed without taking off his boots. When he woke up, it was dark. He went into the living room without switching on any lights, and telephoned his cook. First, he spoke to her husband, who wanted to know who was calling, and didn't sound convinced when he identified himself. Then the cook came on. I'm in Buenos Aires, Estela, he said. She didn't seem surprised. Something new happens every day here, she replied when he asked if she was happy to know that he was back home. Then he tried to call his maid, but an impersonal female voice informed him that the number he had dialled was not in service. Feeling dispirited and perhaps also hungry, he tried to remember the faces of his employees, but the images he could summon were vague: shadows moving in the corridor, a commotion of clean laundry, murmurs and hushed voices.

The amazing thing is that I can remember their phone numbers, Pereda thought, sitting in the dark living room of his house. Shortly afterward, he went out. Wandering aimlessly, or so he thought, he ended up at the café where Bebe used to meet his artistic and literary friends. From the street, he looked into the spacious, well-lit, bustling interior. Bebe and an old man (An old man like me! Pereda thought) were presiding over one of the most animated tables. At another, closer to the window through which Pereda was spying, he saw a group of writers who looked as if they worked in advertising. One of them, who had an adolescent air, although he was over fifty and maybe even over sixty, kept putting a white powder up his nose and holding forth on world literature. Suddenly, the eyes of the fake adolescent met Pereda's. For a moment, their gazes locked, as if, for each of them, the presence of the other were a gash in the ambient reality. Resolutely and with surprising agility, the writer with the adolescent air sprang to his feet and rushed out into the street. Before Pereda knew what was going on, the writer was upon him.

What are you staring at? he demanded, brushing remnants of white powder from his nose. Pereda looked him up and down. The writer was taller and slimmer and possibly stronger than he was. What are you staring at, you rude old man? What are you staring at? The fake adolescent's gang was looking on, following the scene as if something similar happened every night.

Pereda realized that he had grasped his knife, then let himself go. He took a step forward and, without anyone noticing that he was armed, planted the point of the blade, though not deeply, in his opponent's groin. Later, he would remember the look of surprise on the man's face, in which terror blended with something like reproof, and the writer's words as he groped for an explanation (Hey, what did you do, asshole?), as if there could be an explanation for fever and nausea.

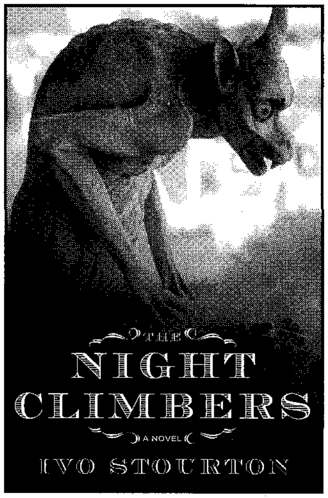
I think you need a napkin, Pereda remarked in a strong, clear voice, pointing at his adversary's bloodstained crotch. Mother, the cokehead said, looking down. When he looked up again, he was surrounded by friends and colleagues, but Pereda was gone.

What should I do, the lawyer wondered as he roamed through his beloved city, finding it strange and familiar, marvellous and pathetic. Do I stay in Buenos Aires and become a champion of justice, or go back to the pampas, where I don't belong, and try to do something useful. I don't know . . . maybe something with the rabbits, or the locals, those poor gauchos who accept me and put up with me and never complain. The shadows of the city declined to provide an answer. Keeping quiet, as usual, Pereda thought reproachfully. But when the day began to dawn he decided to go back. ♦

(*Translated, from the Spanish, by Chris Andrews.*)

THE NIGHT CLIMBERS
BY
IVO STOURTON

"LOVED *THE LINE OF BEAUTY*, MOONED OVER *BRIDESHEAD*, LAPPED UP *THE SECRET HISTORY*? THEN THIS ONE'S FOR YOU."
—*The Independent on Sunday*



"An amazingly accomplished debut. . . . The writing elegant, the story decadent."
—*Observer*

Available wherever books are sold
Watch the author video at
www.bookvideos.tv

SSE
Simon Spotlight Entertainment
www.SimonSays.com
A CBS COMPANY

THE CRITICS

A CRITIC AT LARGE

DRIVE, HE WROTE

What the Beats were about.

BY LOUIS MENAND

"The social organization which is most true of itself to the artist is the boy gang," Allen Ginsberg once observed. It's a sentiment that Frank Sinatra would have appreciated. The time of "Howl" and "On the Road" was also the time of "Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely" and the original "Ocean's Eleven," and although by many measures a taste for the product of North Beach is incompatible with a taste for the product of Las Vegas, the Beat Movement writers and the Rat Pack entertainers were shapers of a similar sensibility.

When "On the Road" came out, in September, 1957, it was praised in the New York *Times* as the novel of the Beat Generation, equivalent in stature and significance to "The Sun Also Rises," the novel of the Lost Generation. The book was a best-seller, and it made Jack Kerouac, who had worked on it for ten years, a celebrity. It is sometimes said of Kerouac that fame killed him—that he was driven crazy by being continually addressed as the spokesman for a generation and by endless unwelcome requests to explain the meaning of the term "Beat." Kerouac was certainly undone by something. After the success of "On the Road," he continued to write at a manic pace, as he always had, but he became a suicidal alcoholic, and he died, of a hemorrhage caused by acute liver damage, in 1969, at the age of forty-seven. (He had by then written more than twenty-five books.) The notion of the Beat Generation was hardly thrust upon him, though.

"Beat" is old carny slang. According to Beat Movement legend (and it is a movement with a deep inventory of legend), Ginsberg and Kerouac picked it up from a character named Herbert Huncke, a gay street hustler and drug addict from Chicago who began hanging around Times Square in 1939 (and who introduced William Burroughs to heroin, an important cultural moment). The term has nothing to do with music; it names the condition of being beaten down, poor, exhausted, at the bottom of the world. (It's used often in this sense in "On the Road.") In 1948, Kerouac is supposed to have remarked, in a conversation with the writer John Clellon Holmes, "You know, this is really a *beat* generation" (followed by a spooky "only the Shadow knows" laugh), and Holmes thought enough of the phrase to use it as the working title of a novel, eventually published as "Go," and to write an article for the *Times Magazine*, in 1952, called "This Is the Beat Generation," in which he credited Kerouac with the term. (The article was solicited by the man who, five years later, wrote the *Times'* review of "On the Road," Gilbert Millstein.)

Jack Kerouac wanderin
Pad Oct. 16, time of Sub
as I saw him, handsome,
park near Avenue A Corn

Holmes wasn't referring to a movement. He was referring to the Cold War generation, which, he said, had been disillusioned by the war, the bomb, and the "cold peace," but was obsessed with the question of how life should be lived. Holmes thought that Beats were optimists, risk-takers, seekers—young people with "a desperate craving for belief." The article popularized the concept, and Kerouac began using it himself. "Beat Generation" was one of his early titles for "On the Road." (Another was "Shades of the Prison House.") After the book came out, he wrote a play called "Beat Generation," an article for *Esquire* on "The Philosophy of the Beat Generation," and another for *Playboy* on "The Origins of the Beat Generation," in which he added "beatific" to the meanings of "Beat." In interviews up to the end of his life, he talked about his conception of the Beat Generation, and the literary movement associated

wer East Side after visiting W.S. Burroughs at our 206 East 7th Street
eans writing, pencils & notebooks in wool shirt pocket, sacred visage
ight face looking into storefront or barroom doorway across from Tompkins
w York Fall 1953.
Allen Ginsberg

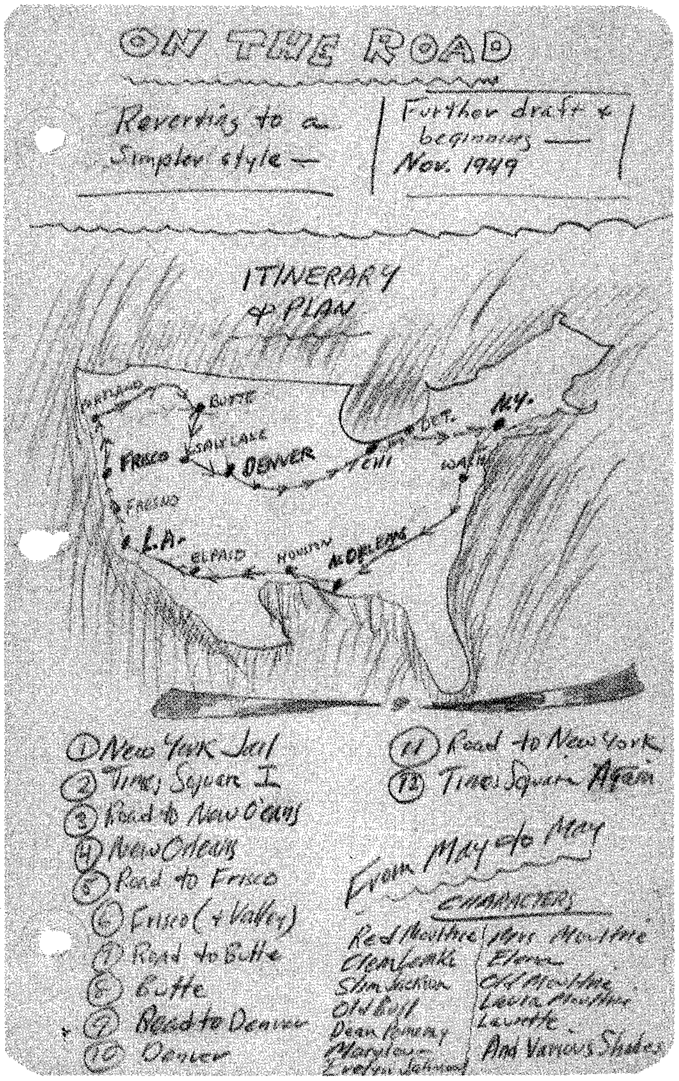
ALLEN GINSBERG/CORBIS

with it, proudly, affectionately, and defensively. In his final appearance on television, a falling-down-drunk performance on William F. Buckley's "Firing Line," he insisted that his idea of beatness had nothing to do with the hippies (whom he despised).

It's true that the Beat writers were caricatured and abused. In the literary world, academic critics, whose aesthetic was all about form and restraint, ignored them, and the New York intellectuals, whose ethic was all about complexity and responsibility, attacked them. Irony was the highbrow virtue of the day, and the Beats had none. This response probably did matter a little to Ginsberg and Kerouac. They were Columbia boys. They had genuine literary aspirations, and they wanted to be taken seriously. On the other hand, they could hardly have lived in hope of the approval of people like Diana Trilling and Norman Podhoretz.

In the entertainment world, "Beat" was transmuted into "beatnik," a word invented, in 1958, by the San Francisco *Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen. The term derives from Sputnik, which was launched into space a month after the publication of "On the Road." (Why is a beatnik like Sputnik? They are both far-out.) The type was made immortal by the character Maynard G. Krebs on the television series "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis"—a goateed, bongo-playing slacker who calls people "daddy-o." But lampooning is merely the price of mass attention.

Satire and polemic are, on some level, defensive. It's possible that something about the Beats simply made people uncomfortable. For the nineteen-fifties images of the Beat—*Partisan Review's* bohemian nihilist and Hollywood's hip hedonist—are almost complete inversions of the character types represented in "On the Road." The book is not about hipsters looking for kicks, or about subversives and nonconformists, rebels without a cause who point the way for the radicals of the nineteen-sixties. And the book is not an anti-intellectual celebration of spontaneity or an artifact of literary primitivism. It's a sad and somewhat self-consciously lyrical story about loneliness, insecurity, and failure. It's also a story about guys who want to be with other guys.



A page from a notebook Kerouac used in writing "On the Road."

The Beat Movement had a male muse. This was, of course, Neal Cassady, the protagonist of both "On the Road," where he is Dean Moriarty, and "Howl," where he is "N. C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Denver." Cassady also figures in several of Kerouac's other books—five of Kerouac's road novels are being published this fall by the Library of America ($35) in a volume edited by Douglas Brinkley—and his iconic presence went beyond the Beats. He became a friend of Ken Kesey, and he was the driver on the Merry Pranksters' famous bus trip, the subject of Tom Wolfe's "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test." The Grateful Dead wrote a song about him. He is the Lou Andreas-Salomé, the Alma Mahler Gropius Werfel, of postwar American culture.

Cassady was an uncanny cross between James Dean and W. C. Fields—a screwup with a profile, a stud with an endless supply of goofy gab. There is sufficient testimony concerning his sexual endowment to overcome the skepticism normally advisable on that topic. Some people who knew and liked him called him a con man (and many people, including Burroughs, disliked and avoided him), but this seems misleading. Cassady was a serial seducer, and, therefore, inveterately untrustworthy. He grew up on the Denver streets—his father was a wino—and he learned to cope by relying on his enormous energy, adaptive wit, and good looks. He charmed people in order to get what he needed, and he was generally in need of something. On the other hand, the people he charmed generally needed something from him—sex or companionship or good times. And Cassady had no material ambitions. He was content to get by, and although he had three wives in rapid succession, and juggled his attentions between them and assorted casual girlfriends, he was intermittently serious about all of them. Everything about Cassady was intermittent. He had a kind of sociosexual A.D.D.

Kerouac and Ginsberg met Cassady in New York City in 1946, around Christmastime. They were introduced by Hal Chase, a Columbia anthropology major from Denver. (Chase appears as Chad King in "On the Road.") Cassady was twenty. It was his first trip to New York, and he was accompanied by his sixteen-year-old wife, LuAnne (Marylou in "On the Road"). Cassady claimed to have stolen five hundred cars when he was a teen-ager, all for joyrides, and he had spent some time in reform school, where he developed an enthusiasm for books. He came to New York because he dreamed of attending Columbia (this didn't happen) and being a writer (this only sort of happened), and he befriended Kerouac and became Ginsberg's lover because he thought that they could help him. Kerouac befriended Cassady because he wanted to write a novel of the road, and he thought that Cassady could be the basis for a good character.

Fundamentally, "On the Road" is autobiographical. It's a report—with pseudonyms (for legal reasons) and elisions (mostly for length reasons)—of four long-distance trips that Kerouac made between 1947, when he bused and hitchhiked by himself from New York to Denver, and 1950, when he drove with Cassady and another friend from Denver to Mexico City. (Kerouac's real-life travels are the subject of "Jack Kerouac's American Journey," by Paul Maher, Jr.; Thunder's Mouth; $15.99.) Kerouac is quite explicit about it: the trips in "On the Road" were made for the purpose of writing "On the Road." The motive was not tourism or escape; it was literature.

In fact, Kerouac began the book *before* his first trip with Cassady, which they took in the winter of 1948-49. He kept detailed journals, and he struggled for a long time to find the proper form for a narrative. He started by inventing fictional characters with backstories, and it

COURTESY ESTATES OF JACK AND STELLA KEROUAC/NYPL/BERG COLLECTION

was three years before he finally dropped the idea of a conventional novel and simply wrote down what had happened. This was the celebrated scroll, a continuous length of paper, a hundred and twenty feet long, on which Kerouac typed the first complete draft of the book in three weeks in April, 1951, with the assistance of his second wife, Joan Haverty, and a lot of coffee. (Not, as legend has it, Benzedrine—which is not to say that Kerouac was a stranger to amphetamines.) He immediately retyped the book on regular paper, and then spent six years revising it. Howard Cunnell's useful edition, "On the Road: The Original Scroll" (Viking; $29.95), makes it clear that, despite his later talk about the spontaneous method of composition, Kerouac did not create the published book in a single burst of inspiration. It was the deliberate and arduous labor of years.

The literature of the road is immense. (One work not often mentioned as a possible influence on Kerouac is Woody Guthrie's autobiography, "Bound for Glory," which was published in 1943. It's more Okie than jivey, but it aspires to the same beatness and the same lyricism of place.) "On the Road" is as self-consciously a work of literature as "À la Recherche du Temps Perdu"—and Proust was a writer whom both Kerouac and Cassady emulated, someone who turned his life into literature. Kerouac read widely and intelligently: he knew what he was doing when he put the scroll into the typewriter, and, just as important, he knew what he was *not* doing, what kind of book he was not writing—just as (to take a common and apt contemporary comparison) Jackson Pollock knew that he was not making an easel painting, with all the aesthetic assumptions that that implied, when he put a canvas on the floor and poured paint on it.

Kerouac credited the inspiration for the scroll to Cassady—specifically, to a long letter, supposedly around thirteen thousand words, that Cassady wrote over several days (he *was* on speed) in December, 1950. This is known as the "Joan letter," because its ostensible subject is a girlfriend of Cassady's named Joan Anderson. But the letter, or the portion of it that survives (the original is lost, a holy Beat relic), is actually a hyper, funny, uninhibited account of Cassady's sexual misadventures with a different girlfriend. It has no stylistic pretensions; it's just a this-happened-and-then-that-happened piece of personal correspondence. Kerouac was knocked out by it. "I thought it ranked among the best things ever written in America," he wrote to Cassady. It had the vernacular directness and narrative propulsion he was looking for, and it gave him the impulse he needed to tape his scroll together and get a complete draft on paper. He saw that this-happened-and-then-that-happened had literary possibilities, and the scroll was a way of forcing himself to stick to this vision. (A little later, Frank O'Hara made poems using the same theory. "I do this, I do that" is how he described them.) The scroll was therefore a restriction: it was a way of defining form, not a way of avoiding form. In religious terms (and Kerouac was always, deep down, a Catholic and a sufferer), it was a collar, a self-mortification. He did, after he finished the scroll, go back and make changes. But first he had to submit to his discipline.

Nostalgia is part of the appeal of "On the Road" today, but it was also part of its appeal in 1957. For it is not a book about the nineteen-fifties. It's a book about the nineteen-forties. In 1947, when Kerouac began his travels, there were three million miles of intercity roads in the United States and thirty-eight million registered vehicles. When "On the Road" came out, there was roughly the same amount of highway, but there were thirty million more cars and trucks. And the construction of the federal highway system, which had been planned since 1944, was under way. The interstates changed the phenomenology of driving. Kerouac's original plan, in 1947, was to hitchhike across the country on Route 6, which begins at the tip of Cape Cod. Today, although there is a sign in Provincetown that reads "Bishop, CA., 3205 miles," few people would dream of taking that road even as far as Rhode Island. They would get on the interstate. And they wouldn't think of getting there fast, either. For although there are about a million more miles of road in the United States today than there were in 1947 (there are also two more states), two hundred million more vehicles are registered to drive on them. There is little romance left in long car rides.

In fact, the characters in "On the Road" spend as short a time on the road as they can. They're not interested in exploring rural or small-town America. Speed is essential. The men rarely even have time to chase after the women they run into, because they're always in a hurry to get to a city. A lot of the book takes place in cities, particularly New York, Denver, and San Francisco, but also Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Mexico City. Even there, the characters are always rushing around.

The bits and pieces of America that the book captures, therefore, are snapshots taken on the run, glimpses from the window of a speeding car. And they are carefully selected to represent a way of life that is coming to an end in the postwar boom, a way of life before televisions and washing machines and fast food, when millions of people lived patched-together existences and men wandered the country—"ramblin' round," in the Guthrie song—following the seasons in search of work. Robert Frank's photographs in "The Americans," taken between 1955 and 1956 and published in Paris in 1958 and in the United States a year later, with an introduction by Kerouac, held the same interest: they are pictures of a world not yet made plump and uniform by postwar affluence and consumerism.

The sadness that soaks through Kerouac's story comes from the certainty that this world of hoboes and migrant workers and cowboys and crazy joyriders—the world of Neal Cassady and his derelict father—is dying. But the sadness is not sentimentality, because many of the people in the book who inhabit that world would be happy to see it go or else are too drunk or forlorn to care. They do not share the literary man's *nostalgie de la boue;* they are restless, lonely, lost—beat. "There ain't no flowers there," says a girl whom Sal Paradise, the Kerouac figure, tries to pick up in Cheyenne by suggesting a walk on the prairie among the flowers. "I want to go to New York. I'm sick and tired of this. Ain't no place to go to but Cheyenne and ain't nothin in Cheyenne." "Ain't nothin in New York," Sal says. "Hell there ain't," she says. She wants to get in the car, too.

And the car is the place to be. Why? The obvious answer is that nothing happens in the car. Everyone has an irresistible urge to get to Denver or San Francisco or New York, because there will be work or friends or women there, but, after they arrive, hopes start to unravel, and it's back in the car again. The characters can't settle down except when they are nowhere in particular, between one destination and the next. But they *want* to settle down somewhere in particular. They are not sociopaths or radicals—as John Leland argues in "Why Kerouac Matters: The Lessons of 'On the Road'" (Viking; $23.95). Their crimes against the establishment consist of speeding, shoplifting, and a minor bout of car stealing (all right, a little illegal drug use, too). They fear and dislike cops, as most people without much money do; other than that, they are not especially antisocial.

They are not hipsters, either, cats too cool for life in suits. There is nothing cool about Dean or Carlo Marx (the Ginsberg character, Karl converted into a Marx Brother). The characters marry and get legally divorced; they take jobs and quit them; they talk about Dostoyevsky and Hemingway and write novels and poems and hope for recognition. The narrator lives with his aunt, who sends him money when he needs a bus ticket home. Otherwise, he draws on his G.I. benefits. A middle-class life with a house and a wife and kids is what Sal wants, and what Dean would want, too, if he could stop getting in his own way. As Kerouac later insisted, it's a mistake to read this as an anticipation of the counterculture.

The car is also a male space. The women who end up being driven in (never driving) the car are either shared by the guys (Marylou, for example, whom Dean hands off to Sal, as Cassady handed off LuAnne to Kerouac) or abandoned (as happens to the character Galatea Dunkel, and as happened to her real-life counterpart, Helen Hinkle). But the car is not an erotic space. Driving is a way for men to be together without the need to answer questions about why they want to be together. (Drinking is another way for men to be together, and there is a lot of drinking in "On the Road." There is a lot of drinking, period.) In this sense, "On the Road" is a little like another sensational road novel of the time: Humbert and Lolita drive obsessively back and forth across the continent because that is the only public way for them to be together. As long as they're driving, they're not doing anything they shouldn't be doing.

But maybe we should not understand the sexual themes in "On the Road" too quickly. Maybe the best thing to say about those themes is that they are murky and underrealized, not entirely within the author's control. Sal has a crush on Dean, in the way that attractive but insecure men can form attachments to gregarious and self-confident men. Sal gets close to women vicariously by being closer to Dean than Dean's women are (until he, too, gets dumped, in Mexico City). This is perfectly consistent with the "Ocean's Eleven" genre of buddy stories: there is always a dame, but the real bond is between Brad and George. They have something with each other that neither could have, or would care to have, with a woman.

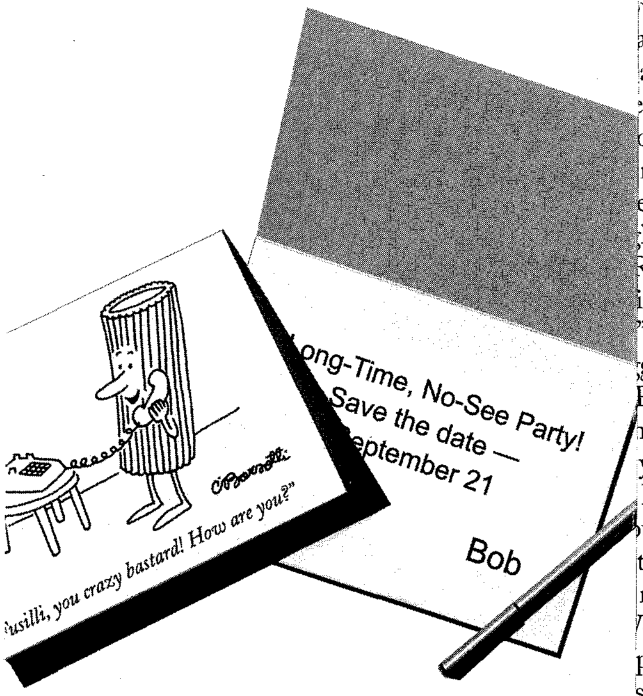
How much farther do we want to go, though? Kerouac was certainly infatuated with Cassady. Partly this was a genuine fascination shared by many; partly it was his belief that in Cassady he had found a perfect foil, in literature and in life, for his own moody and self-absorbed response to experience. Was he in a state of unavowed love? The sexual world of the Beats is, to say the least, confused. There is, right near the top among Beat legends, the strange story of Kerouac and Ginsberg's Columbia friend Lucien Carr, who, in 1944, killed his gay stalker (and former scoutmaster), David Kammerer, in Riverside Park and got Kerouac to help conceal the evidence. Kerouac was arrested as a material witness, and he married his first wife, Edie Parker, in part so her family would put up bail money. (The marriage was annulled after two years.) Kerouac had a tendency to get involved with his male friends' former girlfriends; his longest and closest relationship was with his mother. He was living with her, in Florida, when he died. (She is the aunt in "On the Road"—a more respectable relative for a grown man to be dependent on.) Burroughs was homosexual, but lived with and had children with his common-law wife, Jane Vollmer, whom he loved and whom he shot dead in a drunken game of William Tell, in Mexico City, in 1951. Ginsberg was attracted to straight men: his frustration with Cassady was repeated throughout his life. Peter Orlovsky, his longtime partner, was basically straight. And Cassady was a priapic pinball machine whose sexual bouncing around was plainly from desperation. No one would want to be like that. The Beats were not rebels; they were misfits.

"On the Road" does not cross over into this territory. In the scroll version, the sexual relation between Carlo and Dean is explicit, but that material was eliminated. The sexuality of the book that we have is straight, and mostly male. The book is not really about sexuality; it has a slightly different subject, which is masculinity. There is no good cultural model, in the period in which the story is set, for the kind of men the characters are—as there was no model for Kerouac and Ginsberg themselves. This was the reason that Kerouac became so embittered by the caricatures of the Beats: they played off stock conceptions of masculine types—the hip anarchist, the leotard-chasing, jazz-fiend tea-head, the swaggering barfly, the hot-rodder, the cruising delinquent. Kerouac was none of these things. He was shy with women; he was devoted to his mother and his friends; he was a workaholic (as well as an alcoholic); and he didn't like to drive. His drinking was self-medication; it was not for fun. He was not a macho anti-aesthete. He was the opposite, a poet and a failed mystic. He was what in the nineteen-fifties was referred to as a "sensitivo." This was the demon that he wrestled with. And this is the point at which the thematic preoccupations of "On the Road" meet the style of "On the Road"—the lyrical, gushing, excessive prose.

"Beautiful" is a word that some women used to describe Kerouac. Before he became bloated by drink, he was rugged, too—he had been recruited to play football at Columbia—and he had a husky baritone. He spoke with a Boston accent (he was from Lowell), and he was excruciatingly self-conscious. That was one of the sources of his perpetual discomfort, but when he was sober it added to his appeal: he was virile and he was shy. In 1959, he appeared on television, on "The Steve Allen Show." Steverino was a jazz buff who used to noodle around on a piano while he interviewed his guests (an

CUSTOM
NOTE CARDS

Our wit.


Long-Time, No-See Party!
Save the date —
September 21
Bob
Fusilli, you crazy bastard! How are you?

Your charm.

Custom note cards featuring your favorite
New Yorker cartoons and covers are available
at The Cartoon Bank. Order blank or with your
personalized message inside.

Perfect for invitations, holiday greetings,
acknowledgments, announcements, or
just staying in touch.

$29.95 per box of 20 blank cards
$39.95 per box of 20 personalized cards

ORDER ONLINE.

WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company
1-800-897-8666

ence. Nabokov showed
queeze a morality tale in-
gg; Kerouac showed how
as across an entire conti-
America a subject for lit-
e de-Europeanized the
can writers. Kerouac's in-
ver Thomas Pynchon's
agonist in Pynchon's first
arly alludes to Sal Para-
is Benny Profane. Don
ovel, "Americana," is Ker-
not in style. John Updike
es as a Kerouac disciple,
htened flight by car in the
Rabbit, Run" is a kind of
c allusion to the men of
" And, as Howard Cun-
gests in his edition of the
Road" might be called the
n novel: Kerouac's book
years before Truman Ca-
Blood." It is certainly one
urces of the New Journal-
teen-sixties and seventies,
magazine pieces, by writ-
olfe and Joan Didion and
pson, that took America
ss as its great subject.
"On the Road" have a
of influence as well. They
ve think of them as great
ot, get into the blood.
tent to experience. Many
encounters with Gins-
e department water foun-
job in Boston, two hun-
n New York, and I ended
there by car. I drove at
the trip would not eat up
nd I often stopped for gas
a on the Mass Pike about
n Boston. It's fairly high
there, in the lower ranges
res, and I would stand at
e dark looking at the stars
ar sky as the semis roared
he wind in my hair, and I
e that I was a character in
l, lost to everyone I knew
ne who knew me, some-
rica, on the road. Then I
he car, and, bent over the
e trucks beat on past me,
crackled, the sound going
th oldies from the seven-
e long drop down to the
n, late in the night, late in

◆

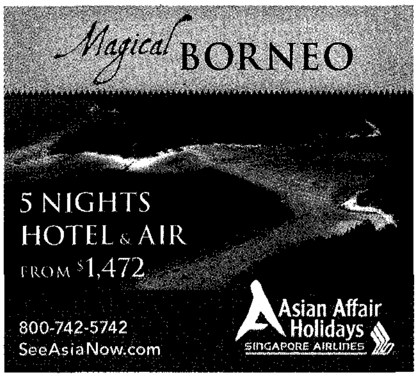
SARAH LAWRENCE
MFA in
WRITING
2007-2008 FACULTY

FICTION
Melvin Bukiet
Carolyn Ferrell
Myra Goldberg
Amy Hempel
Josh Henkin
Kathleen Hill
Mary LaChapelle
Ernesto Mestre
Mary Morris
Brian Morton
Victoria Redel
Lucy Rosenthal
Joan Silber

POETRY
Laure-Anne Bosselaar
Kurt Brown
Tina Chang
Thomas Sayers Ellis
Suzanne Gardinier
Matthea Harvey
Cathy Park Hong
Marie Howe
Kate Knapp Johnson
Thomas Lux
Jeffrey McDaniel
Dennis Nurkse
Kevin Pilkington
Victoria Redel
Martha Rhodes
Vijay Seshadri

NONFICTION
Gerry Albarelli
Jo Ann Beard
Rachel Cohen
Stephen O'Connor
Vijay Seshadri
Alice Truax
Lawrence Weschler
Penny Wolfson

Sarah Lawrence College, Graduate Studies:
1 Mead Way, Bronxville, NY 10708-5999
(914) 395-2371, grad@slc.edu
www.sarahlawrence.edu/writing


Magical BORNEO
5 NIGHTS
HOTEL & AIR
FROM $1,472
800-742-5742
SeeAsiaNow.com
Asian Affair Holidays
SINGAPORE AIRLINES

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW
Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, religious, etc. New authors welcomed. For free 32-page illustrated guidebook **TD-70, call 1-800-821-3990 or write to: Vantage Press, 419 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016**

The Mount Horeb Mustard Museum
invites you to experience the finest mustards in the world.
8 Grand Champion Mustards
With recipes - $49.95, plus S/H (item #NY88)
Home of POUPON U *Free Catalog*
www.mustardmuseum.com 1-800-438-6878

BOOKS

DESERT STORM

Understanding the capricious God of the Psalms.

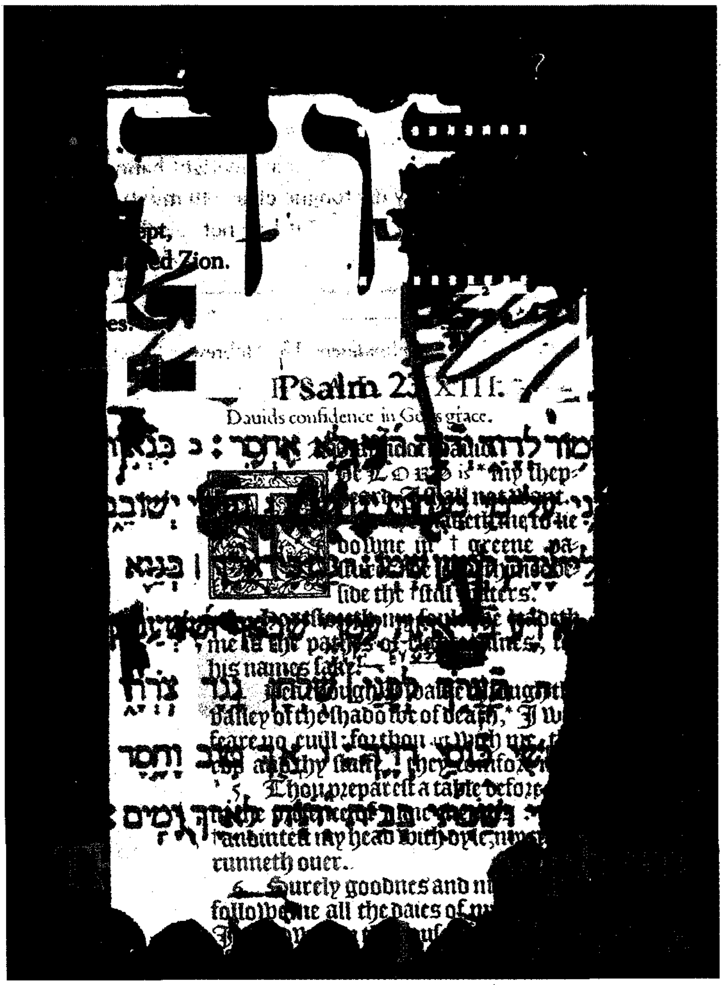
BY JAMES WOOD

What is God like? Is he merciful, just, loving, vengeful, jealous? Is he a bodiless force, a cool watchmaker, or a hot interventionist, a doer with big opinions, a busy chap up in Heaven? Does he, for instance, approve of charity and disapprove of adultery? Or are these attributes instead like glass baubles that we throw against the statue of his invisibility, inevitably shattering into mere words? The medieval Jewish thinker Maimonides thought that it was futile to belittle God by giving him human attributes; to do so was to commit what later philosophers would call a category mistake. We cannot describe his essence; better to worship in reverent silence. "Silence is praise to thee," Maimonides wrote, quoting from the second verse of Psalm 65.

Whatever one thinks of Maimonides' chilly rigor, it is cannily paradoxical that even as he advises silence he quotes from the noisiest book in the Hebrew Bible. And, not only that, but from the very book that dramatizes, again and again, the gap between our language and the indescribable God, between our certainty that God is with us and our anxiety that he has abandoned us, between his cosmic proportions and our comic littleness.

The Book of Psalms is the great oasis in which a desert people gathers to pour out its complaints, fears, hopes; the Psalms are prayers, songs, incantations, and perhaps even soliloquies. In them, the supplicants invoke God as their light, their water, their warrior, their scourge, their buckler, their rod, and their staff. But these images, these human metaphors, also expose the frailty of such supplication, since just as God is conjured into words he seems to disappear: many of the Psalms are like flares sent out into the night sky of appeal. Jesus cried out at his abandonment on the Cross by quoting the opening verse of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" The verses continue:

> Far from my rescue are the words that
> I roar.
> My God, I call out by day and You do
> not answer,
> by night—no stillness for me.


Zion.
Psalm 23 XIII.
Dauids confidence in Gods grace.
Thou preparest a table before
thou anointest my head with oyle, my
runneth ouer.
Surely goodnes and m
followe me all the daies of

Alter's translation yields an ancient text stripped of Christian ideas.

ALEX WILLIAMSON

The famous beginning of Psalm 19 announces that the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky declares his handiwork. Eighteenth-century deists were fond of these verses, because they seem to argue that we can infer God's existence from the glorious evidence of his creation. But the psalm uncomfortably changes course a moment later:

> Day to day breathes utterance
> and night to night pronounces
> knowledge.
> There is no utterance and there are
> no words,
> their voice is never heard.

Now the psalmist seems to say that, if the heavens speak anything, it is not language but possibly only a highly visual silence. Almost three thousand years before such modern doubt, we are briefly in the world of Melville, who complained of "that profound Silence, that only Voice of our God," asking "how can a man get a Voice out of Silence?" This struggle between faith and doubt, hope and despair, is undoubtedly one of the features that have made the Psalms such a help to so many readers and writers, both believers and nonbelievers—and especially to Christians, who have appropriated this book like no other in the Hebrew Bible. The seventeenth-century poet George Herbert perfectly captures this dappled texture in his psalmlike poem "Bitter-Sweet":

> Ah my dear angry Lord,
> Since thou dost love, yet
> strike;
> Cast down, yet help
> afford;
> Sure I will do the like.
>
> I will complain, yet
> praise;
> I will bewail, approve:
> And all my sour-sweet
> days
> I will lament, and love.

Robert Alter's new translation, "The Book of Psalms" (Norton; $35), is radical, at least to a reader brought up on the early-seventeenth-century King James Version. Alter has previously translated a good portion of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch, or Torah) and the two books of Samuel. His work has been characterized by eloquence, scholarly scrupulousness, and a desire to convey in English the concrete ferocity of the original Hebrew. He is particularly alive to formal aspects of ancient Hebrew poetry and prose such as repetition, internal rhythm, and parallelism (in which a phrase amplifies and almost repeats a preceding phrase, as in "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth," from Psalm 72). Because the Psalms are poems, he wants to preserve in English what he calls the "rhythmic compactness" of the originals, "something one could scarcely guess from the existing English versions." His helpful introduction is more polemical than the exegeses he has provided for his other translations: he argues that even the King James translators, whom he, like everyone else, has always admired, pad out their versions with filler.

Look at what Alter does with the last three verses of Psalm 23, that loyal retainer at funerals and memorial services. The K.J.V. is seemingly indelible:

> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
>
> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
>
> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Alter reminds us that Hebrew has a structural brevity that is hard to mimic in English, because in Hebrew, among other differences, "the pronominal subject of verbs is usually indicated by the way the verb is conjugated, without need to introduce the pronoun, unless it is added for emphasis." Thus, in Alter's example, "He will guard you" is one word, *yishmorkha*. Since the verb "to be" has no present tense, and is only implied by the relation of a subject noun and a predicate noun, "The LORD is my shepherd" is only two words and four syllables in the Hebrew—*YHWH ro'i*. Alter's version of the psalm wisely retains the chaste brevity of the K.J.V.'s first verse: "The LORD is my shepherd, / I shall not want." But Alter thinks that the famous and beautiful phrase "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (which was not, in fact, the invention of the King James translators but mostly Miles Coverdale's version, from 1535) conveys little of the original. The Hebrew amounts to eight words, eleven syllables. The English flops in at seventeen words, twenty syllables. So here is Alter's inspired attempt to English the Hebrew:

> Though I walk in the vale of
> death's shadow,
> I fear no harm,
> For You are with me.
> Your rod and Your staff—
> it is they that console me.
> You set out a table before me
> in the face of my foes.
> You moisten my head with oil,
> my cup overflows.
> Let but goodness and kindness pursue
> me
> all the days of my life.
> And I shall dwell in the house of
> the LORD
> for many long days.

Alter compresses the opening lines into just thirteen words, fourteen syllables. He also tries to capture the two-beat and three-beat stresses of the original, an attempt that the King James translators here waive, though in other psalms one sometimes hears the ancient pulse.

Most of the Psalms were probably written between about 1000 and 300 B.C.E.; Alter thinks it unlikely that any of them are later than the fifth or the fourth century B.C.E. Some of them were liturgical in origin and function, chanted or sung at the temple. Others, probably the shorter Psalms, were songs, poems, individual prayers, which is why we so often have the sense of a person moving through different stations of belief, and emerging into the light of what Herbert, in his poem "Prayer," calls "something understood." Many Psalms seem to involve three modes, shuffled into different combinations, which one could call plea, plaint, and praise. Psalm 13 is characteristic, beginning in plaint with the great central cry of the Psalter, "How long": "How long, O LORD, will you forget me always? / How long hide your face from me? / How long shall I cast about for counsel, sorrow in my heart all day? How long will my enemy loom over me?" (In the very psalmic middle section of "To the Lighthouse," in which time eats away at the Ramsays' house and war booms and empires clash, Virginia Woolf knowingly uses this "how long" refrain, putting it into the mouth of the weary lady who has come to clean the summer house.) Then, in the fourth verse, the supplicant switches to a plea: "Regard, answer me, LORD, my God. / Light up my eyes, lest I sleep death." And in the last verse of this short psalm the writer switches again, this time to a kind of formulaic praise, apparently sure that his prayer has worked: "But I in Your kindness do trust. . . . Let me sing to the LORD, / for He requited me."

The three modes are very close to each other in spirit, staining each other: one often hears a barely suppressed note of desperation in the praise, as if it were about to collapse back into plea or plaint. When the psalmist exults "Let me sing to the LORD, / for He requited me," at the end of a prayer that is only six verses long, and which has barely earned its right to such certainty, do we accept it as a statement of fact or as an expression of wishful yearning? Why would a God so absent six verses earlier suddenly make himself present?

This is all part of the human drama of the Psalms, that sense we have of a voice arguing with itself and its God. You could say that soliloquy begins in the Psalms, in a private prayer that is subsequently written down. In the second Book of Samuel, King David, flush with military victory, launches into a long psalm, in which he thanks God for his victory, praises him in grandiloquent terms, and relishes his triumph: "He mounted a cherub and flew, / He soared on the wings of the wind. . . . I pursued my foes and destroyed them. . . . I cut them down, smashed them, they did not rise." (Psalm 18 is virtually identical to David's song.) One can imagine David, in a stage version of his story, approaching the audience and speaking these thoughts aloud. The residue of this origin is still apparent in Shakespearean soliloquy, in which heroes and heroines invoke the gods as they speak their thoughts—Edmund's "Now, gods, stand up for bastards!," Lear's "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!," Lady Macbeth's "Come, you spirits . . . unsex me here." Macbeth's soliloquies borrow from Psalm 18 and

"These are luxury apartments, so use the good water."

• •

from Psalm 90. Verse 9 of Psalm 90 ("we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told," in Coverdale's translation) becomes "It is a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/Signifying nothing."

Psalm 90 is one of the most exquisite of the Psalms. Shakespeare was no doubt happy to borrow from it because it has a quality of desolation (despite its religious affirmations) that he wanted Macbeth to feel and transmit at the end of his life. The psalm uses different temporalities to evoke the massiveness of God's presence. Before the mountains were born, the psalmist says, you not *were* but "are God." A thousand years in your sight, he continues, "are like yesterday gone,/like a watch in the night." (Alter nicely comments that this triadic diminishment takes us from a thousand years to a day, and, finally, to a night watch, lasting just a few hours.) We humans, by contrast, are like the grass that grows up in the day and withers by night; "all our days slip away in Your anger." Our days are "but seventy years,/and if in great strength, eighty years." At any time, God can cancel a life. "So teach us to number our days," as the King James Version has it, "that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Philip Larkin's little poem "Days" offers a sarcastic commentary on the idea of numbering our days:

What are days for?
Days are where we live.
They come, they wake us
Time and time over.
They are to be happy in:
Where can we live but days?

As always in the Psalms, there are two Gods: the known God, who gives and takes away life, and the unknown God, who may or may not be amenable to pleas. The certainty of God's presence and the mystery of his salvation dance around each other.

Psalm 90, like many others, belongs to a theological landscape quite remote from our own. Its wisdom is spacious and fortifying, but while we all feel the brevity and smallness of human life—perhaps especially so now, with our new, borderless knowledge of the cosmos—most of us no longer use an angry and capricious deity as the means of our measurement. This is what the Biblical scholar James Kugel refers to as the "starkness" of the Hebrew Bible, a bare, hard world in which a desert landscape of rocks and rare streams is briefly lit up by columns of fire. For the Psalms, as well as being prayers, are also a people's military songs, with martial values very different from those we nowadays cherish. How many people, dabbing at tears at some memorial service, actually listen to the words of Psalm 23, in which an archaic satisfaction is taken in the fact that God, now more of a captain or a warlord than a shepherd, will set out a table for me in front of mine enemies? Look, I'll stuff myself while you just watch! (I suppose it might bring to mind the reception afterward.) In his commentary for the Anchor Bible text on the Psalms, Mitchell Dahood finds a useful analogue for this attitude in an ancient Akkadian text: "A petty ruler of the fourteenth century B.C. addressed the following request to the Pharaoh: 'May he give gifts to his servants while our enemies look on.' "

The Psalms, like the rest of the Hebrew Bible, are haunted by the traces of the paganism that Judaism must refute. God is merciful and just but is also seen as what Alter calls "a warrior god on the model of the Canaanite Baal riding through the skies with clouds as his chariot, brandishing lightning bolts as his weapons." Throughout the Old Testament, one is aware of the unnaturalness, in ancient terms, of choosing only one God and sticking with him. A bargain has been struck, in which Yahweh says, in effect, "If you choose only me I will choose only you." But both sides find it hard to honor their pledges. How much more consoling, really, to worship lots of gods—to make grateful images of them, to have certain gods work for you as personal helpers and aides—than to be rescued from such comfiness by the irascible and near-invisible singularity that is Yahweh. The Israelites waver, and thus, in the Book of Exodus, after the parting of the Red Sea, they give thanks to God in a psalmlike hymn in which, as in a kind of straw poll, Yahweh has beaten various contenders:

> Who is like You among the gods,
> O LORD,
> who is like You, mighty in holiness?

One of the verses of Psalm 92—"For, look, Your enemies, O LORD, / for, look, Your enemies perish, / all the wrongdoers are scattered"—virtually repeats a line from one of the polytheistic Ugaritic texts found in Syria, in 1928. The earlier Ugaritic text, however, invokes Baal: "Look, your enemies, O Baal, / look, your enemies you will smash." Psalm 82 tells a story in which God—the Jewish God of the Psalms—stands up in a council of other gods and essentially fires his colleagues for not being compassionate enough.

Alter's translation is especially helpful in these cases, because he is determined to remind his readers that they are reading ancient texts with hybrid origins, not Christian prayers with dedicated destinations. The Psalms (like the Book of Job) were relentlessly Christianized by the King James translators. *Nefesh*, meaning "life breath" and, by extension, "life," was translated by Jerome in the Latin Vulgate as *anima* and then as "soul" in the K.J.V., even though, as Alter points out, soul "strongly suggests a body-soul split—with implications of an afterlife—that is alien to the Hebrew Bible and to Psalms in particular." The ancient Hebrew word for the shadowy underworld where the dead go, *Sheol*, was Christianized as "Hell," even though there is no such concept in the Hebrew Bible. Alter prefers the words "victory" and "rescue" as translations of *yeshu'ah*, and eschews the Christian version, which is the heavily loaded "salvation." And so on. Stripping his English of these artificial cleansers, Alter takes us back to the essence of the meaning. Suddenly, in a world without Heaven, Hell, the soul, and eternal salvation or redemption, the theological stakes seem more local and temporal: "So teach us to number our days." Psalm 23, again, is greatly refreshed by translation. Everything is clearer, seeming to have been rinsed not in the baptismal water of the New Testament but in the life-giving water of the desert. Verse 3 of the K.J.V. has "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Alter offers "my life He brings back. / He leads me on pathways of justice / for His name's sake." God saves not our souls but our lives, in Alter's version. And instead of God anointing our heads with oil, as in the K.J.V., in Alter's English "You moisten my head with oil." A footnote points out that the Hebrew verb is not one used for anointment, "and its associations are sensual rather than sacramental." By its end, the psalm is no longer an extended Christian analogy (Christ as the Good Shepherd, anointing his flock) but the giving of thanks by a vulnerable tribe to a deity for its protection. The K.J.V. has the last half line of the psalm as "and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." Alter slaps a term limit on the eternal, and suggests "And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD / for many long days." Again, a footnote anchors the decision: "The viewpoint of the poem is in and of the here and now and is in no way eschatological. The speaker hopes for a happy fate all his born days."

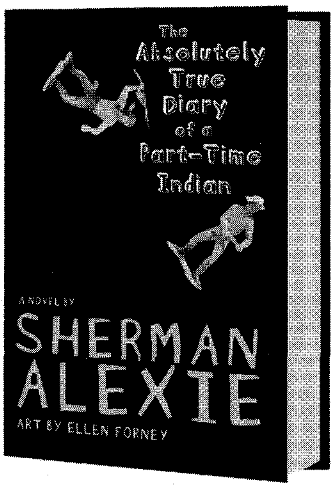
But Alter is musically and poetically sensitive, too, and when the King James translators get something right he lets it be. Psalm 137, my favorite in the book, was written during or after the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C.E., when Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians and the Judeans deported. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," as the K.J.V. has it. The psalmist goes on to say that their captors taunted them: "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." But the exiles had hung their harps on trees rather than "sing the LORD's song in a strange land." It is an exceptionally beautiful and complex lament, in which the poet pledges never to forget Jerusalem ("If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning") even as he claims to find it impossible to sing of Jerusalem while in exile. And, in a further twist, the psalm itself represents just such a song of Jerusalem, a remembrance. These paradoxes combine in an electrifying moment in verse 7, when the poet reminds his readers of the awful day when the Babylonians, the enemies of the Jews, razed Jerusalem to the ground:

> Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

A few months ago, I was reading this psalm, in the King James Version, and wondering about the powerful repetition of "Rase it, rase it," and as I said the words out loud I was struck by the genius of the Jacobean translators, who knew, working in the age of Shakespeare, a thing or two about puns and double meanings. "Raze it, raze it" is also, in English, "Raise it, raise it." It is inconceivable that the seventeenth-century translators did not intuit this doubleness, which is what the poem is about, anyway: even as we remind ourselves that Jerusalem was razed, we are raising it up. Even as we refuse to sing a song of Zion, we are singing a song of Zion. Even as we stay silent, we are making music. There is a splendid anthem by William Byrd, written in the fifteen-eighties, which sets to music a Latin text, later translated into English: "Bow thine ear, O Lord, and hear us: let thine anger cease from us. Sion is wasted and brought low, Jerusalem desolate and void." The anthem proceeds by repeating a downward series of five notes, and this series creates a falling, dirgelike effect, as it is taken up by all five parts. (The five notes are attached to the words "Bow thine ear, O Lord.") But when the music reaches the word "Jerusalem" the soprano part lunges upward, an interval of a perfect fifth between "Je" and "rusalem." The anthem goes down and up at the same time, exactly as the psalm both laments the loss of Jerusalem and finds Jerusalem impossible to lose.

The translator of the Anchor Bible edition of the Psalms exchanges "Rase it, rase it" for the simpler, more brutal "Strip her, strip her," but Alter, without explaining why, retains "Raze it, raze it, / to its foundation." I can't be sure, but I have an idea that this fine literary scholar, with one ear perfectly cocked for English poetry and the other for Hebrew poetry, instinctively understood the verbal power of "Raze it, raze it." ♦

★ "Breathtakingly honest, funny, profane, and sad."
—KLIATT (starred review)


The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
A NOVEL BY
SHERMAN ALEXIE
ART BY ELLEN FORNEY

- The Instant #1 Book Sense Bestseller
- Recipient of 6 Starred Reviews

Little, Brown and Company
Hachette Book Group USA
www.fallsapart.com
www.lb-teens.com
Available now wherever books are sold

WHAT'S THE
BIG IDEA?
Small space has big rewards.
To find out more, visit
www.newyorkersmallspace.com,
or contact Kristi Adams,
at **877.843.6967.**

THE POKE BOAT®
IT'S EVERYTHING A CANOE/KAYAK ISN'T.
It weighs only **22 pounds.** You can buy more than a canoe/kayak.
606-965-2803

thinkSicily.com
superior quality rental villas in Sicily

BOOKS

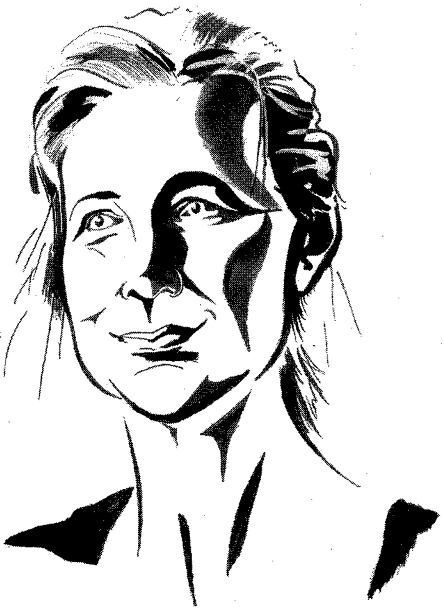
A BOSTON FABLE

Ann Patchett's new novel.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Ann Patchett has not rushed to follow up her breakthrough novel, "Bel Canto" (2001), which promoted her from private to major in the embattled ranks of literary novelists. Before "Bel Canto," she had been admired but obscure, a veteran of academic postings and the grant wars. Her arresting, elegant thriller cast a hostage crisis in a nameless Latin-American capital as an operatic illustration of the well-known truism that captives and captors tend, as the days of mutual exposure draw on, to develop solidarity with one another. Patchett's customarily benign view of human nature took on global import within the besieged mansion of a Peru-like nation's Vice-President. A lavish party—designed by the government to court the Japanese industrialist Mr. Hosokawa, with a special performance by the internationally esteemed lyric soprano Roxane Coss, whom he has long loved from afar—is invaded by a tiny army of terrorists, consisting of three revolutionary "generals" and fifteen youthful recruits from the impoverished countryside. Their hope is to kidnap the President, but he does not attend. The coup thus fails at the outset; negotiations drag on while government forces tunnel beneath the mansion and, in the barricaded cohabitation of hostages and hostage-takers, the ill-educated young rebels, exposed to the international array of refined party guests, reveal great talents for singing, chess, and romance. Two of the peasant soldiers turn out to be female, and a Mozartean weave of amorous attraction, lessons in literacy, and companionable soccer games unfurls before the tragic dénouement. One revolutionary ends thus: "A pain exploded up high in her chest and spit her out of this terrible world."

But this terrible world also holds art and love; of the book's many rave reviews, one called "Bel Canto" "the most romantic novel in years" and another promised readers that they would experience "a strange yearning to be kidnapped." The sole complaint about the saga that this reader heard was a protest, from a rigorous Jewish critic, that terrorists weren't really so nice. But Patchett's point, not only in this novel but in her well-regarded earlier three, seems to be that everybody is nice, given half a chance. In the pessimistic halls of literary fiction, she speaks up, gently but firmly, for human potential. "Bel Canto" sold moderately in hardcover, but hearty paperback sales and a sprinkling of prizes, including the PEN/Faulkner, put a conspicuous shine on a rare achievement, a captivating blend of political drama and aesthetic passion.



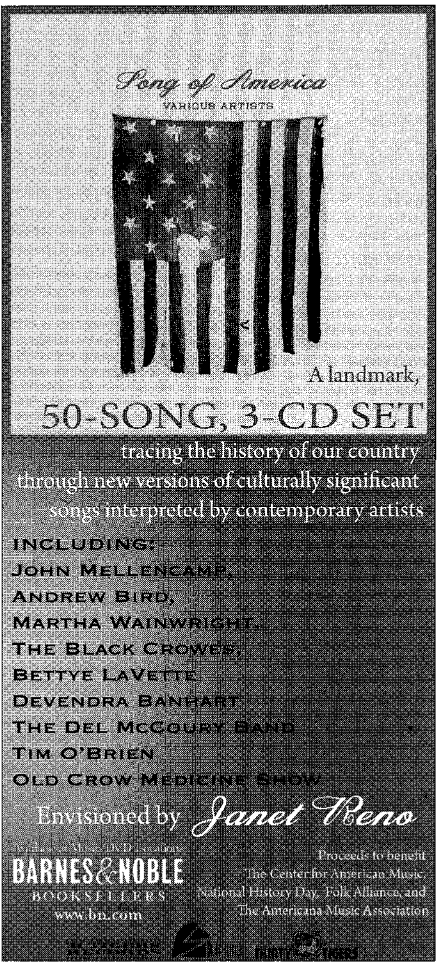
Patchett gives us the world as it should be.

PAUL HAMLYN

She followed it not with another novel but with a curiously loving memoir, "Truth & Beauty" (2004), describing her enduring relationship with a friend made in college and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Lucy Grealy. Grealy had lost much of her jaw to childhood cancer and endured chemotherapy, radiation, and reconstructive surgery that still left her facially deformed. The success won by her first book, "Autobiography of a Face," was dissipated in pills, drink, promiscuity, a funked novel contract, and, finally, heroin addiction, before her death, in 2002, at the age of thirty-nine. "I'm such a fuckup," she whispered in Patchett's ear at one of her many low points. The author achieved, silhouetted against this brightly lit portrait of a heedless life, a self-portrait, that of a tenderhearted, even-tempered, calmly dedicated artist who, as Grealy put it, is "always going to be fine." This somewhat dismissive reassurance ("It's your blessing and your curse") is offered when Patchett tries to interrupt the other woman's spectacular litany of misfortunes with some of her own troubles. Grealy, in the course of her self-destruction, diagnoses Patchett's tenacious attachment to her: "At least I can make you feel like a saint. That's what you've always wanted." Stung, Patchett retorts, "That's a terrible thing to say," but her works, habitually trafficking in the numinous and the magical, do show a loyalty to her Catholic upbringing. Her masterly first novel, "The Patron Saint of Liars" (1992), tells of a pregnant young woman who flees her harmless husband and finds refuge in a Catholic home for unwed mothers, and her latest, "Run" (HarperCollins; $25.95), begins and ends with a holy statue, a painted rosewood carving of a red-haired Mary stolen from an Irish church in the mid-nineteenth century and brought to Boston by the descendants of the thief and his wife, who strikingly resembled the sacred image.

Compared with "Bel Canto," as it must be, "Run" is a tricky and flimsy work, a stylized fable of families, of parenting and vocations and race, set in a Boston and a Cambridge that, though accurately enough mapped by a former fellow at Radcliffe's Bunting Institute, do not feel as solid underfoot, as welcoming to the roots of imagination, as, say, the Kentucky of "The Patron Saint of Liars" or the Los Angeles of "The Magician's Assistant" (1997). Primed for commercial success, the book seems overdesigned, sprinkled with ornamental snowflakes and lowercase headings, and the novel feels overplotted. The plot, indeed, is so dense, artfully leading us from one point of suspense to the next, that the reviewer can scarcely venture a summary without betraying some of its carefully hoarded and deployed mysteries. It all takes place in twenty-four hours, during a New England snowstorm and its chilly, sunny aftermath, except for a last chapter in Baltimore five years later. Bernard Doyle, a Boston lawyer, politician, and former mayor, and his late wife, Bernadette, conceived one son, Sullivan, and, failing to produce another, adopted two black boys, Tip and Teddy, who are twenty-one and twenty at the time of the snowstorm. While, in this blinding storm, after the three Doyles have attended a talk in Cambridge by Jesse Jackson, the widower and Tip are arguing about the young man's lack of interest in politics and his obsessive interest in the million-plus dead fish preserved in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, Tip steps off a curb and an unknown black woman pushes him out of the path of an oncoming S.U.V. that he has failed to notice. He gets away with a sprained ankle and a slight fracture of the fibula; the woman takes the brunt of the hit and sustains a broken hip, wrist, and rib, a concussion, and other injuries. Her eleven-year-old daughter, Kenya, gathers up her mother's possessions in the snow, accompanies her and the Doyles to Mount Auburn Hospital, and, though she wants to stay there with her mother, is persuaded to spend the night with the Doyles in their home in Boston's South End. Arriving, they discover that Sullivan has unexpectedly returned from Africa, where he has been for years, distributing antiretroviral drugs to the H.I.V.-positive.

Even so brief a summary reveals a certain playfully schematic quality to the author's design: Tip and Teddy carry the names of New England's most popular recent politicians; Kenya bears one geographical name, and her mother, it turns out, is called Tennessee Moser; Sullivan, a scoffer, shares his name with his mother's uncle, Father John Sullivan, who, in his infirm last days in the old priests' home Regina Cleri, is besieged by ailing persons who believe, not entirely wrongly, that his touch has miraculous healing powers. Like Sister Evangeline in "The Patron Saint of Liars," he is one of Patchett's holy clairvoyants; though his appearances in "Run" are few, he is among the novel's more entertaining and persuasive characters. The kinship panorama, in a text that even with generous leading comes to less than three hundred pages, spreads itself thin: Teddy and Tip, physically hard to distinguish, are built around rather abstract traits—a religious, do-


Song of America
VARIOUS ARTISTS
A landmark,
50-SONG, 3-CD SET
tracing the history of our country through new versions of culturally significant songs interpreted by contemporary artists
INCLUDING:
JOHN MELLENCAMP,
ANDREW BIRD,
MARTHA WAINWRIGHT,
THE BLACK CROWES,
BETTYE LAVETTE
DEVENDRA BANHART
THE DEL McCOURY BAND
TIM O'BRIEN
OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW
Envisioned by Janet Reno
Available at Music/DVD Locations
BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS
www.bn.com
Proceeds to benefit The Center for American Music, National History Day, Folk Alliance, and The Americana Music Association

THANK GOD, IT'S FRIDAY
ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS ON DVD
THE CRITERION COLLECTION • WWW.CRITERION.COM

10 Million Pieces!
China, Crystal, Silver, Collectibles
183,000 Patterns • Old/New • Buy/Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.®
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept YO
www.replacements.com®

The Retreat at Sheppard Pratt
A first class setting for world class care
- Psychotherapeutic milieu
- Intermediate length of stay
- Private pay setting in Baltimore, MD

410-938-4040 www.retreatatsp.org

ADVERTISEMENT

on the **town**

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

THE
NEW YORKER
Festival
October
5|6|7
New York City

The acclaimed literary and arts festival returns.

Tickets are now available at ticketmaster.com, at all outlets in the ***ticketmaster*** New York metropolitan area, or by calling 1.877.391.0545.

Please visit **festival.newyorker.com** to sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails and to view the complete Festival guide.

LUXURY

gooding streak and a categorizing scientific bent, respectively. Sullivan, whose bad behavior somehow cost his father his political career, behaves, as the reader sees him, with a spontaneous warmth and relational ability that make his black brothers look shy and stiff. Confined to a day's crowded comings and goings by foot and taxi in the snowbound streets, the novel relies heavily on retrospect and reminiscence—a lot of telling in proportion to the showing. Its willfully controlled mysteries keep us reading—what is the grudge between Sullivan and his father? what happened in Africa? who was the black woman who saved Tip's life? why were she and her child out so late in Cambridge? who is the other black woman she talks to in her delirium, also named Tennessee?—but even the most pliant reader can get to feeling manipulated. To be sure, no narrative divulges its facts all at once, but this one seems more of a tease than its earnest themes warrant.

Race—race in greater Boston, the birthplace of abolitionism yet within memory the site of some ugly anti-integration scuffles—is a muted issue in "Run." Its live nerve is touched only in a stray sentence or two. Tip, at the Jesse Jackson speech, observes that the audience holds a majority of blacks: he, a black male raised with white advantages, "would have said it made no difference to him, when in fact that alertness he always carried in his neck, the alertness that stayed with him so consistently he never even noticed it anymore, temporarily released its grip and disappeared." The theme of political engagement, so natural an undercurrent in "Bel Canto," here intrudes awkwardly in the form of fragments of famous speeches, from Eugene Debs to Martin Luther King; Doyle, obsessed with politics, had demanded that Tip and Teddy memorize them.

The theme dearest to Patchett, of vocation or, in religious terms, calling, is somewhat precariously carried by the central figure of Kenya, an eleven-year-old slightly too good to be true. She has the wit to gather up her mother's wide-flung possessions in a snowstorm; when Tip, walking too far on crutches, comes down with hypothermia, she successfully applies her Girl Scout lessons in its treatment; and in her budding relations with the Doyles she shows a preternatural poise, lucidity, and courage. Her vocation is to run—hence the novel's stark title. She speeds around Harvard's Gordon Track, not only outracing the few others on it but stopping them dead: "All the other runners on the track had stopped now, the way dancers will stop when the soloist steps forward to dominate the floor." She is running, Patchett tells us, to outrun "the sight of her mother being hit by the car . . . and the girl at the front desk intimating that Kenya was not a person to be on this track." She outruns even her own niceness, meditating, "Nobody who was very, very nice would ever work this hard to take something they wanted only for themselves. Nice girls did not demand that everyone stop what they were doing and look at them but that was exactly what she asked for and what she got."

Yet the liberal, brotherly, quickly loving environment in which she finds herself offers not much more resistance to her running than air. Even at the outset of her ordeal of transformation, she finds that "people treat you nicely when you come to the emergency room in a police car." The people Kenya encounters in this novel are generally nice, and become nicer. Perhaps, in the diversity-positive twenty-first century, an African-American child encounters less resistance to her progress than used to be common; or perhaps Ann Patchett in her own niceness gives us the world as it should be, rather than as the dirty, abrasive place it is. As realism, her novel is pale; but as a metaphoric representation of growth it transcends its sentimentality. When Kenya awakes for the first time on the sunstruck top floor of the Doyle house, the waves of imagery express not just one eleven-year-old's arrival in a brighter, more affluent place but the civilized enlightenment whose glories should be available to all:

> She could do nothing but take in the light. It had never occurred to her before that all the places she had slept in her life had been dark, that her own apartment had never seen a minute of this kind of sun. Even in the middle of the day, every corner hung tight to its shadows and spread a dimness over the ceiling and walls. . . . But in the light that soaked this room a girl could read the spines of the books on the very top shelf. "*The Double Helix*," she said aloud. "*A Separate Peace*." She stretched her arms down the comforter and admired them. She spread her fingers wide apart and took her fingernails under consideration. Every bit of her was straight and strong and beautiful in this light. She glowed. ♦

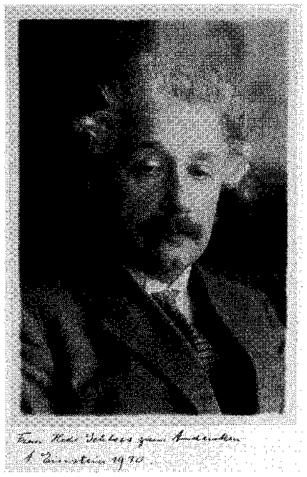
BRIEFLY NOTED

Hotel de Dream, *by Edmund White (Ecco; $23.95).* The American novelist Stephen Crane, according to an unreliable contemporary, began a book about a male prostitute. As no such manuscript survives, White steps in with an artfully pulpy tale about Elliott, a teen-age newsboy in New York, who is kept by a married banker. As frame and counterpoint, he shows us Crane, terminally tubercular, summoning his remaining strength to dictate "The Painted Boy" to his common-law wife, who transports him from England to the Black Forest in a vain search for a cure. White illuminates Crane's literary milieu, the urban gay subculture of his time, and the relationship of a writer's experience to his fiction. Though White presents a convincing version of how Crane, "a heterosexual man who had wide human sympathies," might have depicted a boy of the streets, it's strange that, in Crane's final moments, Elliott's life flashes before his eyes more vividly than his own.

Maynard and Jennica, *by Rudolph Delson (Houghton Mifflin; $24).* "It is not romantic that no one meets anyone twice in New York," Maynard Gogarty quips, after failing to woo the beautiful stranger Jennica Green on the uptown No. 6 train one steamy day in August. Happily, this remarkable début is inclined toward romance, in a giddy boy-meets-girl (twice) fable that evolves into an astute portrait of a relationship. The lovers are an odd couple—she a workaholic Princeton grad from California, he an indie filmmaker and New York native who loathes everything outside his home town. Their story is told documentary style, with thirty-five characters taking turns narrating. Each character has an appealing voice, and the chatty arrangement highlights Delson's comic timing. Best is his portrait of New York, which emerges as both fantastical and hilariously recognizable, a unique place defined by its possibilities and worthy of the dreams it inspires.

Ike, *by Michael Korda (Harper; $34.95).* In June, 1944, Anne Frank heard General Eisenhower on the radio, announcing the invasion of Europe, and wrote in her diary, "I have the feeling that friends are approaching." Korda's engaging biography does justice to Eisenhower's leadership on D Day and to the disarming mixture of amiability and strength that marked his character. But its preoccupation with defending Ike against (mostly British) accusations of ineptitude, from an American perspective, is overdone. And while Europe's liberator is here in depth, America's President is not. When Korda finally gets to Ike's candidacy—ninety pages from the end of a seven-hundred-and-twenty-three-page book—his identity as a Republican is as murky to the reader as it was to voters at the time. There is a lot about Kay Summersby, Ike's (maybe) mistress, which is fun, but the treatment of the Korean War, for example, is perfunctory.

The Art of Political Murder, *by Francisco Goldman (Grove; $25).* On April 26, 1998, after the U.N. brokered an end to Guatemala's decades-long civil war, Bishop Juan Gerardi was beaten to death. Two days earlier, he had presided over the release of a report that, while documenting abuses by both the government and the guerrillas, held the Guatemalan Army responsible for the vast majority of the two hundred thousand civilian deaths in the conflict. Trying to discover who murdered the bishop takes Goldman, an elegant novelist with Guatemalan roots, on a nine-year journey. He follows the case through the eyes of the bishop's colleagues and of a brave prosecutor as they ignore death threats, go into exile, and even see family members murdered. Goldman spools out clues to the murder like a crime writer, uncovering a terrifying conspiracy that implicates powerful figures in the military, the government, and the media.



SWANN

AUTOGRAPHS • BOOKS/MANUSCRIPTS • MAPS/ATLASES
PHOTOGRAPHS • POSTERS • WORKS OF ART ON PAPER

AT AUCTION

Oct 11 **Autographs**
1:30pm *Illustrated Catalogue:* $35
Specialist: George Lowry, ext 303
glowry@swanngalleries.com

Catalogue Orders: 212-254-4710, ext 0.

104 East 25th St • New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212 254 4710 • Fax: 212 979 1017
Enjoy selected video previews at
www.swanngalleries.com

IAG

A sharp comedy about class, privilege, and gambling on your future.

none of the above

by Jenny Lyn Bader
Directed by Julie Kramer

TicketCentral.com
or call 212-279-4200

The Lion Theatre
Theatre Row
410 W. 42nd St.

SOUTH ARK STAGE Rhoda Herrick, Artistic Director

Shoofly

stories • music • poetry

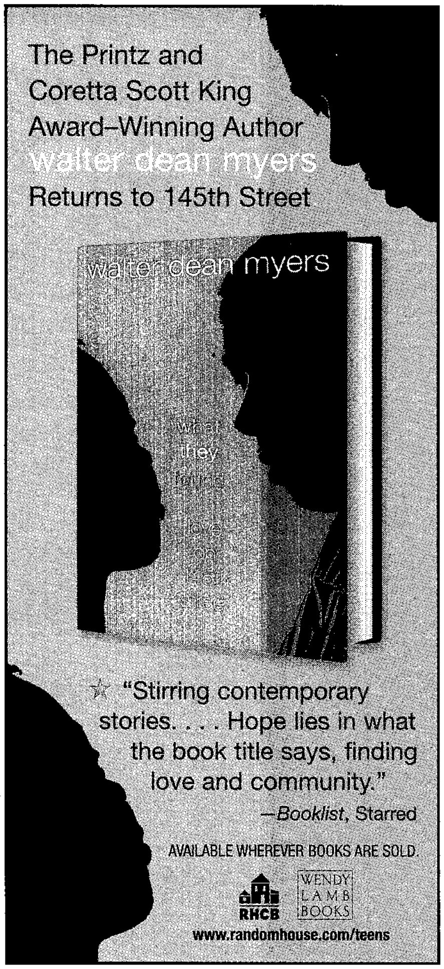
SAMPLER AVAILABLE

Award-winning CDs for the wee literati (ages 3 to 7)

1-888-929-9401 • shooflyaudio.com

COCKTAIL PIANO

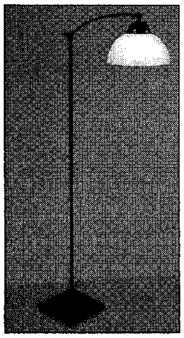
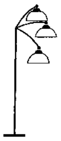
OUR NEWEST: Cocktail Piano Vol. 11 - "WHEN OCTOBER GOES"
Girl From Ipanema, Ebb Tide, When October Goes, Hey There, La Vie En Rose, I Can't Begin To Tell You, She's Funny That Way, Because Of You, Imagination, I Have Dreamed (King & I), and more.
CDs $18.95 ea. S&H Incl. in USA. 10% off for 5 or more (USA)
To hear call T/F (888) 388-1555 To ORDER: T/F (888) 521-9330
Sound samples for all albums @ www.cocktailpiano.com


The Printz and
Coretta Scott King
Award-Winning Author
walter dean myers
Returns to 145th Street

walter dean myers

☆ "Stirring contemporary stories. . . . Hope lies in what the book title says, finding love and community."
—*Booklist*, Starred

AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD.
RHCB WENDY LAMB BOOKS
www.randomhouse.com/teens



PERFECT READING LAMP
LEDGER Floor Lamp
The Double Swivel Action places light correctly for a high or low chair, desk or a computer.
Bronze with Slate Base
Opal White Shade
Height (Adj): 30"-54"
100 w bulb
Dimmer Switch
$139.00
2 for $239.00
shipping $14.00 each
Mail or Phone Orders
NEW HAVEN LIGHTING 1-800-243-3123
P.O BOX 6353 Hamden, CT 06517
www.newhavenlighting.com

Stone Soup
The Literary
Magazine by Children
A perfect gift to inspire creativity
$37/yr (6 issues) • 800-447-4569
stories • poems • art • ages 8-13
www.stonesoup.com

Country Curtains.
Window Decorating - Simplified!
Free catalog with Hundreds of Styles
1.800.876.6123 or www.sendcatalog.com
Ask for Dept. A061007 • Stockbridge, MA 01262

THE THEATRE

FAMILY DRAMA

Lucy Thurber and Kate Fodor on domestic dysfunction.

BY HILTON ALS

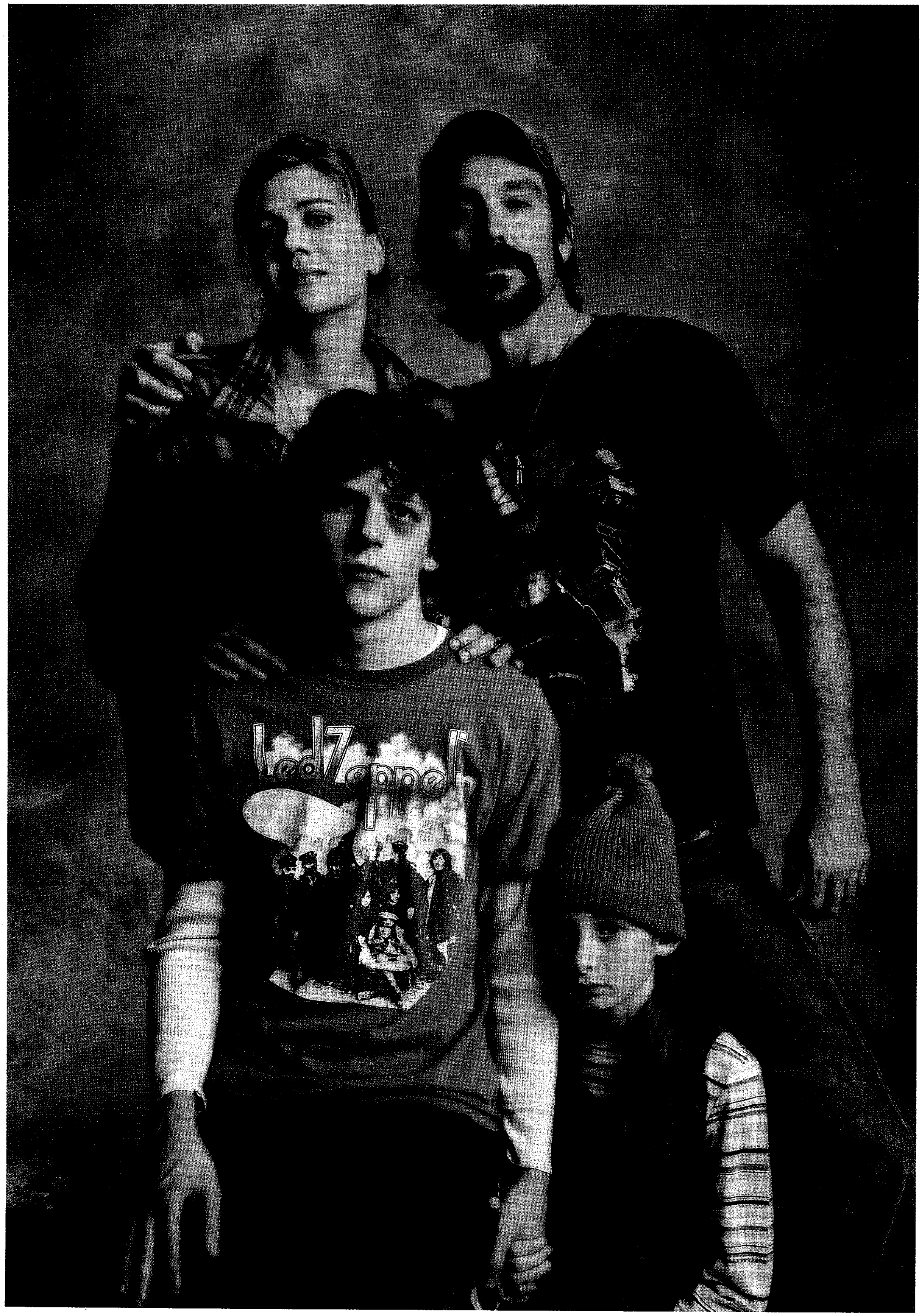
In Lucy Thurber's "Scarcity" (an Atlantic Theatre Company production at the Linda Gross), the thirty-something Martha (Kristen Johnston) is a case study in co-dependence. She both fights for her life and hands it over to Herb (Michael T. Weiss), her husband of almost twenty years. Even as he lurches in and out of his crummy La-Z-Boy, swilling whiskey and sputtering obscenities, you can't take too seriously the invective that Martha hurls at him—mostly because *she* doesn't. Martha is rather thrilled by the fact that her man has retained his bad-boy swagger after all these years. In her eyes, Herb was, and still is, a catch—a Sean Penn type, without the conscience. She'll never tame him; nor does she want to. Part of what makes Herb hot to Martha, despite his alcohol-induced blackouts and his inability to take care of his family, is his physical strength and his verbal cruelty. Herb makes Martha feel both protected and put-upon, like a sexy martyr.

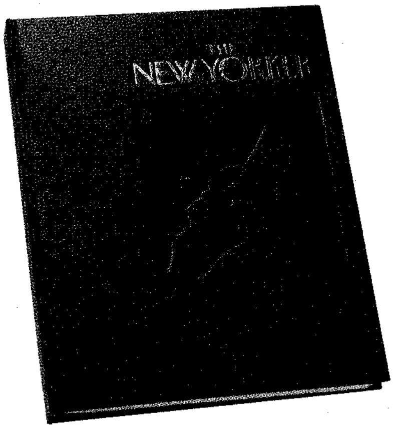
The slovenly king of his castle, Herb keeps all his minions at his beck and call—not only Martha but their prepubescent daughter, Rachel (Meredith Brandt), about whose body he makes leering comments, and their adolescent son, Billy (Jesse Eisenberg). The audience's first thoughts are: Will Martha and Herb's cycle of abuse and self-abuse cause irreparable damage to their children? And how did Martha and Herb devolve from the beauties they once must have been—they're both tall and rangy, with a kind of flickering charm that cuts through their funk—into these semi-adults who recoil from hope, like babies from curdled milk? Gone are the days when Herb and Martha were escapees from a Bruce Springsteen song, filled with possibility. Twenty minutes or so into their bickering, you realize how much the couple seem to enjoy the tune they can't get out of their heads. It goes like this: Despair, destruction, despair. Blessedly, Thurber never explains how Martha and Herb came to this pass. Johnston and Weiss manage to stitch their characters' past into their present behavior, and they act up a storm while doing it; too much expository dialogue would have left them less time to explore.

Curtain up: Martha is at home, hanging out with Rachel, watching TV, in the kind of sad one-story house you'd drive right by on a wintry afternoon on your way to somewhere else, trying not to imagine the tacky lives of its inhabitants. Inside, grime coats everything, even the countertop that Martha tries to wipe down from time to time. (The dismayingly realistic set is by Walt Spangler.) Rachel sits on the sofa with her mom and reads tarot cards. For Rachel, this is more than a hobby; she's looking for her future. Martha, on the other hand, is just having a little breather—and a cigarette—before she goes off to work the night shift at a grocery store. Her family can't make it on food stamps alone. Suddenly, Louie (Todd Weeks), Martha's cousin and a town cop, comes in with Herb. Herb is not four sheets to the wind—he's eight. Not only has he thrown up on Louie's uniform; he's been handcuffed to prevent any future disturbances. Herb, however, is all about disturbances. And, no matter how pissed off his family may seem, he knows that he's safe: he provides the only drama that these humdrum pinheads ever experience.

After Louie leaves, randy Herb claims his prize, carrying Martha off to bed, despite her protestations. In their offstage bedroom, they perform the kind of mating dance that Rachel and Billy—who's just come home—are fa-

Johnston, Weiss, Eisenberg, and Brandt in "Scarcity." Photograph by Ethan Levitas.

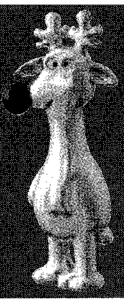

led Zeppelin



THE 2008
NEW YORKER
DESK DIARY

www.newyorkerstore.com
Order online to save $5 and
receive FREE personalization.
THOMAS DUKE
1-877-408-4269
Order by calling toll-free M-F, 9 A.M.-6 P.M. E.S.T.
Now available in six bold colors:
THENEWYORKERSTORE
in association with THE CARTOON BANK

No. 1611...$104
Snowy River
From the great Australian outback, a pure fur felt hat for sun or rain. Fully lined, 3¼" brim.
Sizes: 6¾-8⅛, colors: Fawn, Gray or Black.
Add $7 for handling. Satisfaction guaranteed.
Visit davidmorgan.com or request a catalog
Akubra® Hats • Filson® Clothing & Luggage
Bosca® Leather goods • Celtic & NW Coast Jewelry
David Morgan
800-324-4934 davidmorgan.com
11812 N Creek Pkwy N, Ste 103 • Bothell WA



Boynton
Collection
Don we now our Bob,
the carnelian-nosed reindeer.
Sterling Silver $75, 14K Gold $399
1-800-477-1856
www.dallaspridgenjewelry.com
©Sandra Boynton. All Rights Reserved

miliar with: noisy, brutal, and brief. Billy has a black eye: he got into a fight at school. What he's really fighting for is to catapult himself past his parents' miserable complacency and find some sort of hope. That hope arrives in the slim, stylish form of a teacher named Ellen (Maggie Kiley), who both sees Billy's potential and is attracted to him. In Thurber's world, sex is less a quest for pleasure or an expression of love than it is the retardation of emotion. Billy can't accept Ellen's caring attentions—there's been no precedent in his life. So he forces the situation, pushing her into a compromising position—a situation in which Herb and Martha take a certain amount of satisfaction. Why should Billy's intelligence separate him from his parents? Ellen is a threat to their status quo.

Still, Ellen presses on, helping Billy secure a scholarship to a private school. And this is where Thurber makes her mark as an artist: she shows us how some parents would rather keep their offspring in their muck than allow them an opportunity for advancement. Herb and Martha treat Ellen like a leech they can't shake. When she and Billy bring home the forms that Herb and Martha need to sign, Billy waits in an oversized suit, already visibly a class above his T-shirt-wearing folks. Noticing that—and Billy's excitement—Herb deepens his voice, as though he were warning his child against the hazards of faith. "Hey, boy!" he shouts, condescendingly, and Billy shrinks from the weight of his disapproval. In that moment, we know that Billy, whatever success he makes for himself in the world, will always be that "boy" to his flamboyantly weak dad, whose only power in the world is to fuck it up.

One cannot say enough about the actors here, particularly Johnston and Weiss. They have voices that were made for radio—sonorous and intimate, then funny and full of life—and they use them to express the inner lives of their rapidly disintegrating characters, who bellow because they need to feel *something*, because they need to believe that *someone* in the world can hear them. Billy hears his parents all right, but what he hears makes him double over in pain. Eisenberg brought the same kind of nearly spastic anger to his role as Walt Berkman in Noah Baumbach's 2005 film, "The Squid and the Whale," but Jackson Gay, who has directed everyone in this show so intuitively and clearly, pulls something out of Eisenberg that only the stage can give you: a character's reflections in a moment-by-moment reality. Thurber belongs to a generation of young female playwrights and filmmakers such as Bridget Carpenter, Brooke Berman, and Debra Granik—whose 2004 film, "Down to the Bone," won the Directing and Special Jury Prize at Sundance—all of whom grew up watching shows like "Roseanne" but were able to peel away the laughs and reveal the ugly lives beneath.

Kate Fodor's new play, "100 Saints You Should Know" (at Playwrights Horizons, under the direction of Ethan McSweeny) is about secrets and lies and the Catholic Church—and sometimes all three at once. Conventionally structured, it has a beginning and a middle—a disgraced priest returns home to his mother and deals with his sexuality while a young delivery boy who does business with Mom deals with *his* sexuality—and an end that . . . well, I won't tell you. The evening passes painlessly enough. The experience of watching "100 Saints You Should Know" is akin to the mildly mind-numbing exercise of screening twelve episodes of "The Duchess of Duke Street" back to back: all you want while watching is a blanket and a nice cup of tea. I would suggest that you skip the play entirely, if it weren't for Lois Smith, who plays Colleen, the elderly Irish mother who worked her entire life so that her son, Matthew (Jeremy Shamos), could go to Harvard and become a priest. That he fulfilled her ambition for him only makes Colleen a little peevish, though: he has launched himself past her, into areas of thought and being that she can't understand. Colleen's incomprehension of the changing world—not to mention of the edicts of Catholicism, in which she grew up believing—makes her so bewildered and tenderhearted that you just want to cuddle her, to provide a safe place for her to have a lie-down as the world turns outside her darkened window, sad and unknowable. ♦

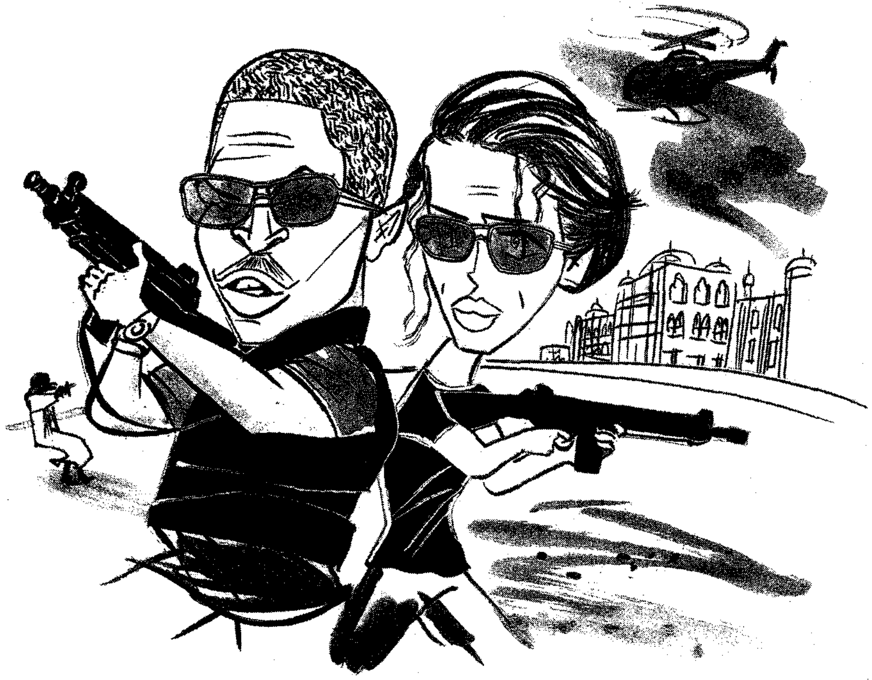
THE CURRENT CINEMA

OUTLAWS

"The Kingdom" and "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford."

BY ANTHONY LANE

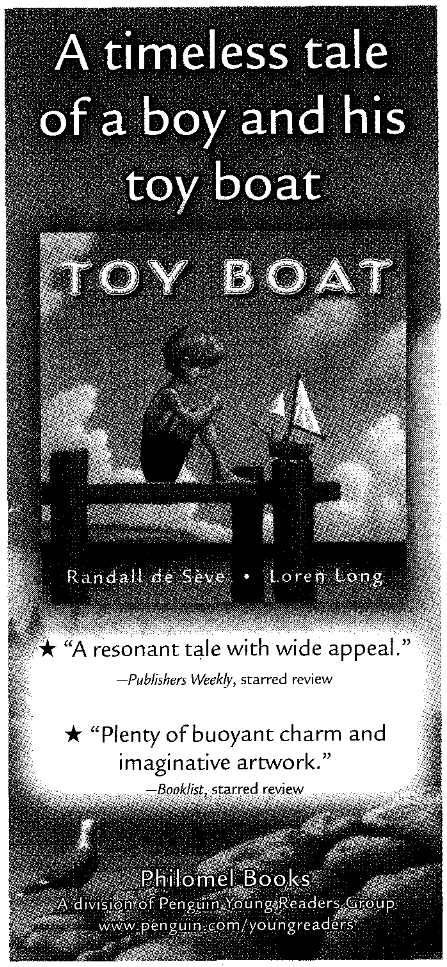
No film whose closing credits list a "senior inferno artist" is likely to lull us with its tranquil charms, and "The Kingdom" is a thumper of a movie, full of furious souls. The kingdom in question is Saudi Arabia, and before the story gets under way we are treated to a potted history of that country's birth, gushing wealth, and political machinations. The scene then narrows to an American compound near Riyadh—a miniature America, in fact, with the families of oil workers enjoying a ballgame and a barbecue. The compound comes under a series of staggered attacks, with the director, Peter Berg, cleverly allowing us to think the worst is over before slamming us with something even worse.



Jamie Foxx and Jennifer Garner as F.B.I. agents in Peter Berg's movie.

TOM BACHTELL

A team of F.B.I. investigators flies in to survey the devastation, interview witnesses, and nail the culprits, the implication being that the Saudis themselves—some of whose law-enforcement personnel were among the victims—are not up to the job. The team consists of Ron Fleury (Jamie Foxx), Janet Mayes (Jennifer Garner), Grant Sykes (Chris Cooper), and someone named Adam Leavitt (Jason Bateman), although I must admit that I kept forgetting who he was and why he was there. As for Mayes, the biggest mystery in the film concerns the dispatching of a female agent to an Arab land. When the Saudi prince in charge of security turns up to inspect the scene of the atrocity, the local State Department official, Damon Schmidt (Jeremy Piven), takes one look at Mayes's breasts, beneath her olive-green T-shirt, and says, "We need to cover these situations." More improbable still, Mayes is a forensic specialist, whose task is to examine corpses, so one has to ask: if the F.B.I. is so smart, why did they send her to a place where—according to this movie, at any rate—she is forbidden to touch the Muslim dead? The answer is that Berg's film is driven not by logic but by simple needling. Like his heroes, he doesn't particularly want to understand


A timeless tale of a boy and his toy boat

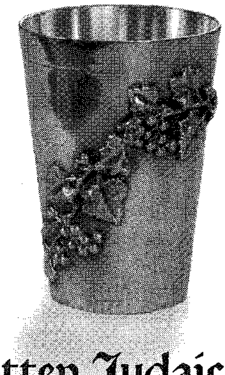
TOY BOAT

Randall de Sève • Loren Long

★ "A resonant tale with wide appeal."
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ "Plenty of buoyant charm and imaginative artwork."
—*Booklist*, starred review

Philomel Books
A division of Penguin Young Readers Group
www.penguin.com/youngreaders


Kiddush Cup

forgotten Judaica
www.ForgottenJudaica.com

JOHN ⚓ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
3 DAY RUSH AVAILABLE!
Raised Monogram
AVAILABLE IN STERLING, GOLD & PLATINUM. FROM $590
VIEW YOUR MONOGRAM ONLINE! PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

TIMESHARES 60-80% off Retail!
★ Best Resorts, Prices &Weeks
★ 500+ Worldwide Resorts!
★ Call For FREE Catalog
Buy Direct! (800) 348-0094
holidaygroup.com/save

ADVERTISEMENT

on the town

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM *NEW YORKER* ADVERTISERS.

THE NEW YORKER Festival
October 5|6|7
New York City

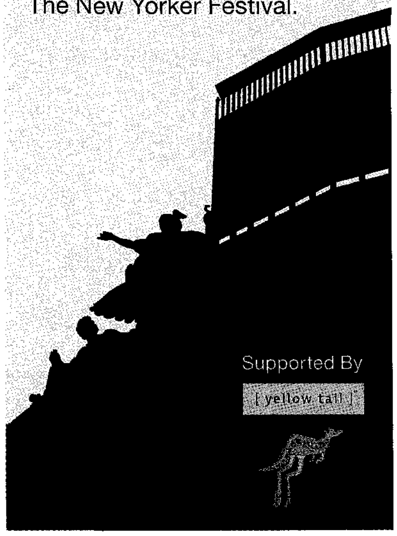
Get Connected

This year, there's a new way to connect to The New Yorker Festival.

Just text **"NYFEST"** to **644444** and sign up to receive official updates on The New Yorker Festival via text message. Find out the latest information on ticket availability, get a heads-up on happenings at Festival Headquarters, plus learn about free events, Festival giveaways, and more.

For more information, go to **festival.newyorker.com.**

Festival Wire text messages brought to you courtesy of [yellow tail], Official Wine of The New Yorker Festival.



the Saudis, or get along with them, or play by their arcane rules. He just wants to get in their face.

As "The Kingdom" progresses, the role of the F.B.I. squad begins to inflate. At first, under the guiding hand of the local investigator, Colonel Faris Al Ghazi (Ashraf Barhom), the agents are largely confined to their quarters and barely permitted to disturb the crime scene. As the rules relax, the film turns into "C.S.I.: Riyadh," with Sykes fishing around in bomb craters for twisted clues, and, by the end, the fantastic four—heavily and inexplicably armed, despite having been stripped of all weapons when they arrived—are up to their ears in a mad, percussive firefight in a militant patch of the city, dodging rocket-propelled grenades, kicking down doors, and generally shooting anything that doesn't speak English. Anything adult, that is: "The Kingdom," written by Matthew Michael Carnahan, is one of those violent, jaw-jutting films which like to signal a softer side, every now and then, by stooping down to address the anxieties of children. At home, the kindly Ghazi is seen cuddling his offspring, thus setting up a symmetry with Fleury, who at the beginning of the film, back in Washington, soothes his young son. "There are a lot of bad guys out there," the kid says. "But you ain't one of them," Fleury replies.

The trouble with Berg's film is not hard to pin down. Since he made a sour little black comedy called "Very Bad Things," in 1998, he has become adept at the marshalling of multiple figures, and the boom and stutter of the action sequences in the new film—whether on the freeway or in the claustrophobic back alleys of Riyadh—leaves you thoroughly winded and wiped. Even in the midst of that response, however, you realize that what whips up the melee is vengefulness. This is not to be confused with justice; the film has nothing but contempt for the traditional methods of diplomacy and international law, and the true villains of the piece are not the terrorists, whose patient bombmaking we watch in horrified detail, but Schmidt, the sweating wimp from the State Department, who is nauseated by the sight of blood, and, even more heinous, the U.S. Attorney General (Danny Huston), with his quibbling reluctance to unleash the F.B.I. on foreign soil.

There is a mischievous moment, early in the plot, when Fleury basically blackmails his way into Saudi Arabia. Meeting in secret with the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, he announces that, if he and his team cannot proceed with their mission, he will authorize the leaking of a financial scandal, linking Saudi nobility to terrorist funding. And the leak, he adds, will travel way beyond D.C., into the heartland, to places like Terrell, Texas. In other words, Fleury is reaching over the Ambassador's head, and over the Beltway, and appealing directly to the indignation of the common man. If Frank Capra had ever made a Rambo movie, it would have looked like this.

The cunning extends to the casting. Instead of Sylvester Stallone, we get Jamie Foxx, still trailing clouds of Ray Charles. His sly, slurring manner is never more than an inch away from the comic, and, because he is so unmilitary in his bearing, some of the sting is taken out of the mayhem he wreaks. Only Chris Cooper looks as if he knew what he was doing, and his laconic, middle-aged routine comes as a welcome emollient: informed by Ghazi, halfway through the shootout, that they have strayed into a bad neighborhood, he replies, "Yeah, no shit," his features as calm as the head on a coin. As for Jennifer Garner, she will not, I suspect, gaze back on "The Kingdom" as her happiest hour. When Mayes is first told of the assault on the compound, she slumps into disbelieving grief, although her nose-wrinkling expression is more suggestive of a plumber, sniffing your property for blocked drains. Still, she cheers up, relishing her opportunity not merely to see the sights of Saudi Arabia but, whilst there, to stab a knife into the groin of a terrorist. This is what is known as symbolism, although it does leave you wondering what sort of overheated havoc she, Fleury, and the others will leave behind as they fly home. Could it be that the tension between East and West, and thus the potential for yet more destructive payback, is even more pronounced than when they arrived?

It is no mean feat to make a boring film about Jesse James, but Andrew Dominik has pulled it off in style. The style in question is one of undeniable beauty: searching and languorous, with a palette of tweed-browns, grays, and dirty whites, touched here and there by the bright nickel of a pistol. The director of photography, Roger Deakins, has devised a trick of keeping the center of the frame cleanly in focus while the rest of it slides away in a blur. We might as well be peering through a pinhole camera, and, at first sight, this glance at the photographic manner of the period is perfectly judged; after it has been used a dozen times, however, it lapses into a mannerism.

We are mostly in Missouri, in the eighteen-eighties, as some of the wildness is draining from the West, and as Jesse James (Brad Pitt) is already rising above the brute facts of his existence—he was a multiple murderer as well as an uncommon thief—and ascending to the status of myth. "All America thinks highly of me," he says, and his No. 1 fan is a nineteen-year-old named Robert Ford (Casey Affleck), who keeps a stash of Jesse James storybooks under his bed. In fact, James is at the butt end of his career. We see him and his brother Frank (Sam Shepard) rob a train at night (Jesse is nobly silhouetted against the billowing steam, as if in a student production of "Godspell"), but that is their last job together, and from here on the wanted man is a wanderer. Somehow, Robert and *his* brother Charley (Sam Rockwell) oil their way into Jesse's presence, if not his affections. Why he should have humored them—Robert, to judge from Affleck's portrayal, was a cross between a scallywag and a creep—is anyone's guess, but he did, and he paid the price.

The movie is called "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford," and the arch, give-it-all-away sobriety of the title warns you to brace yourself for deconstruction. And so it proves. Dominik, who both wrote and directed the film, cannot resist coaching us in the finer points of his characters, in case we miss something. Ford followed James, a voice-over explains, "as if he were composing a biography of the outlaw, or as if he were preparing an impersonation." The interplay of the two men has its oddities, as do the particulars of the killing, on April 3, 1882, not to mention the crazy aftermath, with fifty thousand dollars offered for James's body as it lay on ice, like a salmon. There is a good ninety-minute documentary to be made on the Jesse James cult as a firing pin of modern celebrity; but do we really need two and a half hours of slow, shaggy-dog meditation on the man himself, in his dull decline, with all concerned acting their long johns off to fill the time? Revisionism is a fine thing, but too much of it makes you long for the vision of old. ♦

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2007 CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

VOLUME LXXXIII, NO. 29, October 1, 2007. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 19 & 26, June 11 & 18, July 9 & 16, September 3 & 10, and December 24 & 31) by Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Louis Cona, vice-president and publisher; Jamie Engel, associate publisher; Alatia Bradley, advertising director; Karen Quinn-Panzer, advertising director; Maria Tenaglia, advertising director; Judy Safir, director of finance and business operations; Daniella Wells, associate publisher of creative services and marketing; Jacqueline Cinguina, executive director of marketing and integrated strategy; Steven Porter, executive creative director; Damian Slattery, executive director of creative services; Lynn Oberlander, general counsel. Condé Nast Publications: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Debi Chirichella Sabino, senior vice-president and C.F.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president/human resources. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001. Canada Post: return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Karen Quinn-Panzer at (212) 286-5465. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.

★ "[A] timeless stunner."
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"An absolute wonder."
—Marjane Satrapi, author of *Persepolis*

THE ARRIVAL
BY SHAUN TAN

★ "An astonishing wordless graphic novel."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "Filled with both subtlety and grandeur." —*Booklist*, starred review

★ "Beautiful." —*School Library Journal*, starred review

ARTHUR A. LEVINE BOOKS
SCHOLASTIC
www.scholastic.com
Art © 2006 Shaun Tan.
SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

THE McLEAN CENTER
AT FERNSIDE

A World-Class Alcohol and Drug Residential Treatment Program in a peaceful, rural setting with exceptional accommodations.

Princeton, MA
www.mclean.harvard.edu • 1.800.906.9531

McLean Hospital is a psychiatric teaching facility of Harvard Medical School, an affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital and a member of Partners HealthCare.

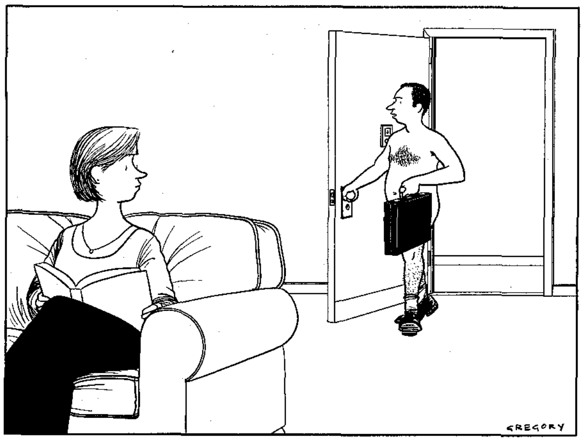
MAGIC MAESTRO MUSIC
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Stephen Simon, conductor
CDs • delightful works with narrator ages 6 & up
(866) 432-7624
www.MaestroClassics.com

THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME
Linking Past, Present & Future Generations
"The Journey: A Celebration of Life"
A guidebook to help you write your life story
Legacies and Legends 803-366-3065
www.legacies-and-legends.com

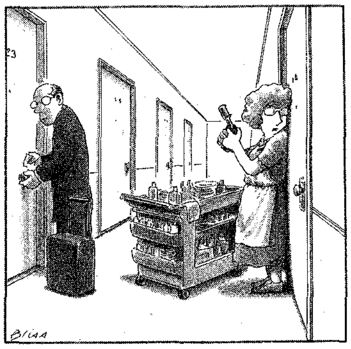
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Leo Cullum, must be received by Sunday, September 30th. Finalists in the September 17th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the October 15th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"On second thought, it's more of a sandals day."
David Wood, Marquette, Mich.



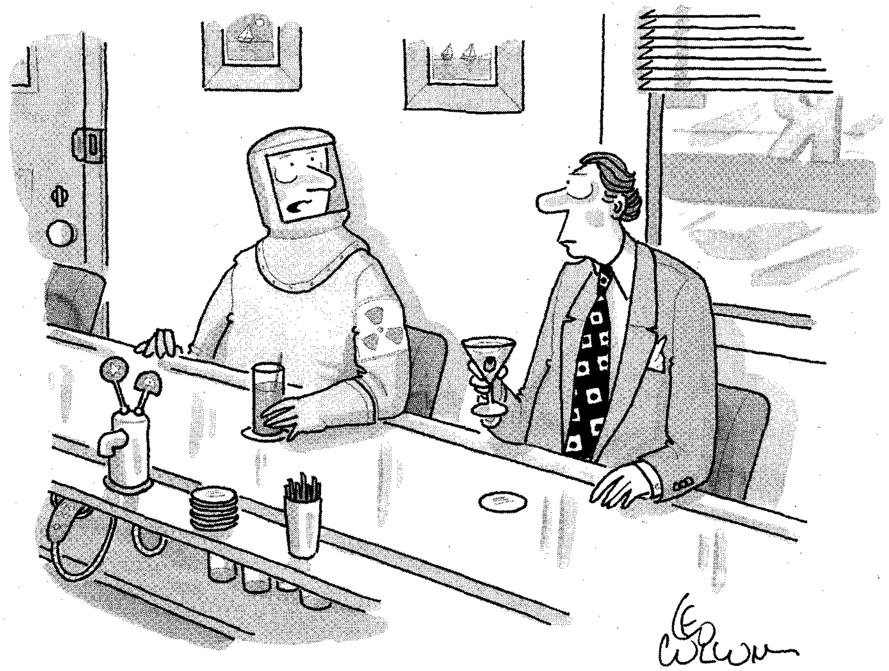
THE FINALISTS

"Oh, now you want to talk, when all week it was 'Do Not Disturb.'"
Diane Ferraro, Brooklyn, N.Y.

"The time is 11:59. You have one minute to check out."
Lance Dickson, San Jose, Calif.

"I can fluff your pillow the easy way or the hard way."
James Gendron, Syracuse, N.Y.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



" "

retirestronger.com

Go to your happy place.

Imagine yourself a million miles away. Not a worry in the world. Get comfortable and close your eyes. Visualize a place that is filled with happiness and serenity like a placid lake or waterfall. Focus on this image and try to imagine that you are actually there. Keep focusing until you can actually feel, see and hear all the elements of that scene.

+15

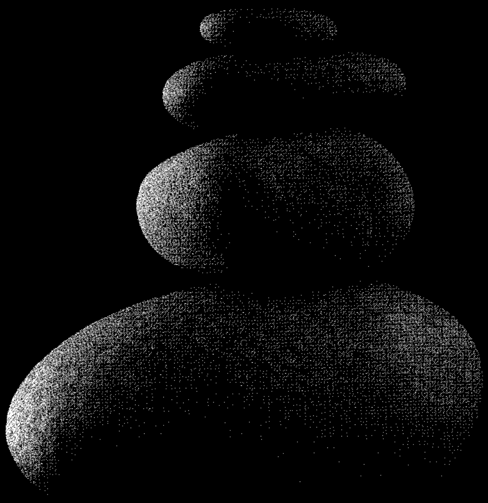
reducing stress can add 15 years to your life

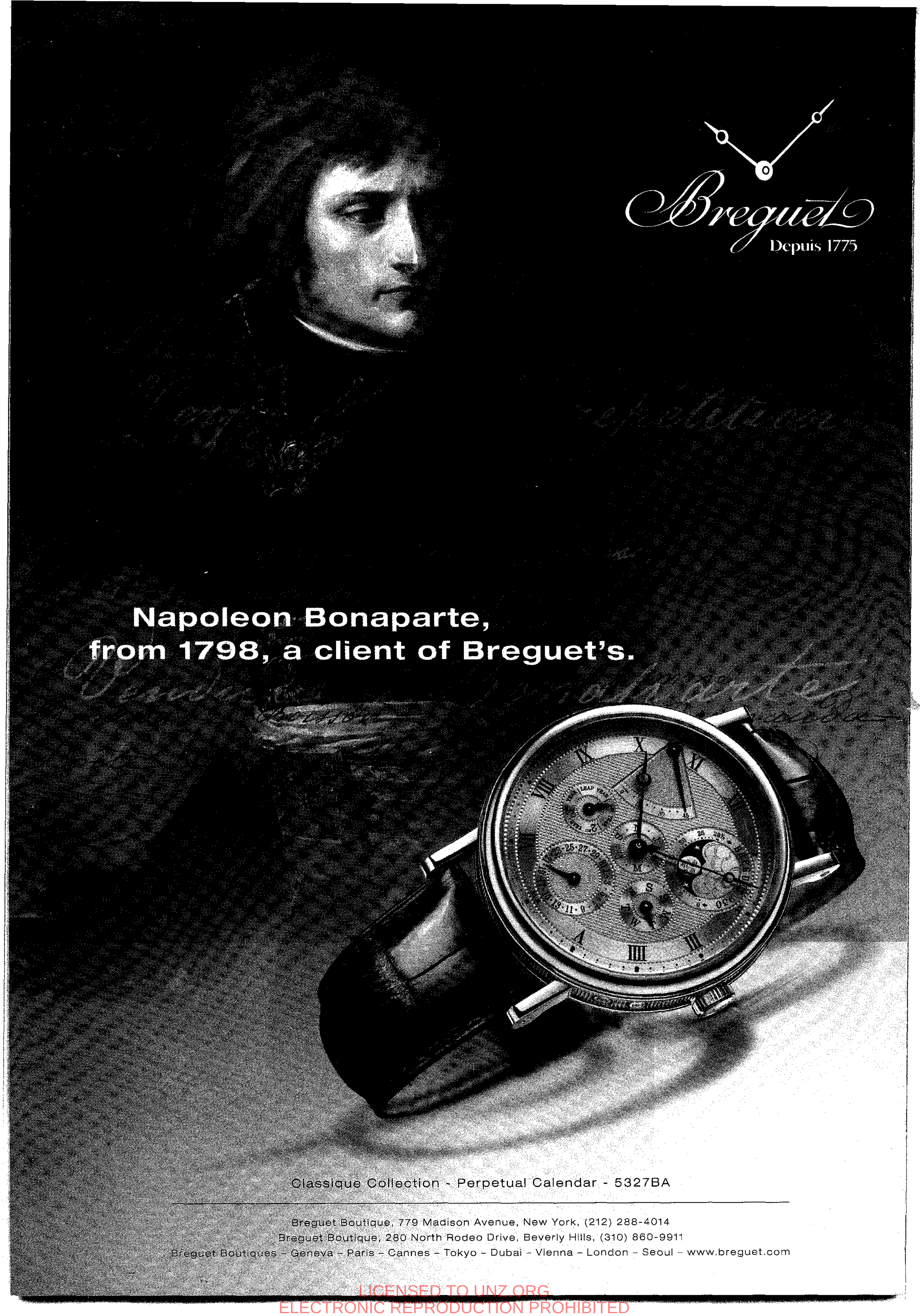
The AIG companies have the strength to be there when you retire, so you'll never outlive your money. Ask your financial advisor about AIG or call 877 AIG 0993.

live longer retire stronger

AIG THE STRENGTH TO BE THERE.

[illegible]




Breguet
Depuis 1775
Napoleon Bonaparte,
from 1798, a client of Breguet's.

Classique Collection - Perpetual Calendar - 5327BA

Breguet Boutique, 779 Madison Avenue, New York, (212) 288-4014
Breguet Boutique, 280 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 860-9911
Breguet Boutiques - Geneva - Paris - Cannes - Tokyo - Dubai - Vienna - London - Seoul - www.breguet.com